



THE
CHURCH BEFORE THE FLOOD.

BY

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So shall her holy bounds increase,
With walls of praise and gates of peace;
So shall the vine, which martyrs' tears
And blood sustained in other years,
With fresher life be clothed upon,
And to the world in beauty show
Like the rose-plant of Jericho,
And glorious as Lebanon.

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PREFACE.

ONE loves to trace the stream upward to its fountain. Christianity was first preached in Paradise. Adam and Eve were the first believers. Abel was the first Christian martyr. They lived and loved, and prayed and praised, in the grey and misty dawn. They looked forward and upward to the rising of the Sun of righteousness, and rejoiced in the increasing light. In their faith and hope, the "woman's seed" was all and in all. By faith Enoch and Noah walked with God. These ancient saints did not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of God.

The Church I ever regard, not as an ecclesiastical hierarchy—Episcopate or Presbyterate—however useful these features may be in their place, but as the company of faithful Christians, the congregation

of all believers. On earth it has been sometimes hidden, often few, occasionally visited with exterminating persecution, yet never extinguished. "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world," is her inherited promise. "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," is her experience. "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand," is her safety. All our visible churches are merely provisional or temporary arrangements, till that which is perfect comes ; that is, till "the manifestation of the sons of God." Then that which is provisional shall be done away, and that which is perfect will alone remain.

It is in vain that we belong to the outer and visible, if we be strangers to the inner and true church. May we feel it personally important to edify the latter, and less and less our interest or duty to quarrel about the former.

The author hopes to present in another volume *The Church of the Patriarchs*, as soon as he can spare time to arrange it.

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CHAPTER I.

THE BIBLE.

“Hast thou ever heard
Of such a book? The Author, God himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life,
And death—eternal life—eternal death.”

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”—1 TIM. iii. 15, 16.

“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our
earning.”—ROM. xv. 4.

WE have in the existing church what the Church before the Flood had not, a written rule of faith. This is an inestimable privilege. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son.” We have all that Adam, and Enoch, and Noah had, and very much more, far more clearly revealed. In this introductory chapter

let me make some remarks on this precious Record.

The Bible is not a disquisition on astronomy, or philosophy, or geology, or other science. Man can wait the slow process of discovery in science, but he cannot wait a single moment for an answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" because in that moment his soul may be required of him. It is, therefore, wisely and beneficently arranged, that the results of science shall be from slow discovery; and it is no less beneficently arranged that the disclosure of the way of salvation shall be instant and complete. The Bible, therefore, leaves the Copernican and the Ptolemaic systems of astronomy to settle their disputes, and replies primarily to the anxious question, "What must I do to be saved?" The Bible is not a discovery; it is a revelation. Between these two words there is a broad and important distinction. A discovery is that which man makes, and which man can enlarge; a revelation is that which God gives, and which God alone can add to. When Columbus found America, he made a discovery; and subsequent voyagers have left mankind better acquainted with that continent than he

himself was : it was a discovery that man could make, and that man can still mend. But the Bible is not a discovery which has been reached by the soaring wing, or by the sustained and persevering industry of man ; it is a revelation that comes down from heaven in all its beauty and in all its completeness, so much so, that he that attempts to add to it takes the place of God, and “ shows himself as if he were God,” professing to mend what is already perfect, and to add to that which God has pronounced complete.

The Bible is an eminently popular book ; it is emphatically the book, not for the college, nor for the scientific hall, but for the people. The figures which it employs are drawn from the most familiar and every-day experience ; the colouring spread over it is, in the nineteenth century, fresh as it was when it was first given, and is still fitted to attract and arrest the multitude. Human works endure, and are popular, in proportion as they partake of this universality. The Bible has the great element of catholicity in its bosom ; it is a book not for a coterie, nor for a sect, nor for a party, but for all mankind. And while it speaks to all at once, it speaks to each separately, with no less distinctness and em-

phasis. The great congregation can listen to God's voice sounding in the Bible; the solitary man in his closet can hear its sweet chimes in his soul also; it provokes a resonant echo in the heart of the humblest listener. Like God's own omnipresence, the Bible reaches to the loftiest spirit, and prescribes the laws and the direction of his orbit; and it descends to the humblest artisan, and tells him at once, in its own majestic and paternal tones, how to be happy and holy for ever. All history, all criticism, all hermeneutics, (if I may use a long word,) all archæology, are not, and may not be, substitutes for the Bible, nor do they add to the Bible; they are meant simply to show the Bible in its own exclusive and dominant position. When the critic sits down to illustrate the Bible, he simply tries to put it before us just as it was put before the Corinthians, so that we may, from the standing-point which the Corinthian Christian and the Roman Christian had, see the same glory sweep by, and hear the same voice speak from the heavens to our listening and obedient heart.

The Bible is composed of a great many books, and books that are cumulative (if I may use the expression) and progressive. Genesis gives the

unity, the origin, the apostasy of our race, and the promise of a Saviour. Leviticus, Exodus, and Deuteronomy are the outlines and shadows of the approaching Sun, seen by Levi, in some such way as the sun in the firmament is seen by the astronomer through a smoked lens: the eye of the one is not able to endure its intensity; the minds of the others were not prepared for the full blaze, the meridian splendour, of the Sun of righteousness. Job is a specimen of the deep yearning and craving of the human heart, amid the waves and billows of sorrow and affliction, for a comforter and redeemer. Solomon is a manifestation of human wisdom in its loftiest discoveries, but of its unsatisfactoriness in them all. Ruth is for the genealogy of the Saviour—important, because it presents to us a beautiful link in that genealogy. Isaiah brings into the desolations of the Captivity the splendours of a glorious day. Ezekiel gives us visions of the future temple, the spread and triumphs of the kingdom of the Messiah. Haggai sees the temple lighted up with a glory to which the first temple was a stranger. Malachi, like an early morning star, heralds in the approaching rays of the Sun, saying, “Unto you that fear my name

shall the Sun of righteousness rise ;” and, after four hundred years of silence, John the Baptist appears as if he were Malachi risen from the dead, responding to his prophecy, by saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.” The Gospels unfold the biography of the Son of God. The Acts of the Apostles carry into practical development the functions, the attributes, and powers with which they were invested ; and the Apocalypse is the close of all the glories of the past, the prophetic dawn of all the splendours of the future, telling us in words, sure as rising and setting suns, that as the world began with paradise, the world shall close with paradise again.

In looking at the whole Bible we find the following data :— It contains in all sixty-six books, by forty different writers. It presents history, biography, parables, letters, proverbs, poems, speeches. Some of them were written by kings, some by shepherds, some by herdsmen, some by vine-dressers, some by tent-makers, some by a physician. They were composed in different circumstances, in successive centuries, in various phases of joy, of sorrow, of affliction, and of tribulation. Between the first writer in

Genesis, and the last writer in the Apocalypse, 1500 years intervened. Now, must we not conclude, in the exercise of common sense, that in men of so varying professions, placed in so varying circumstances, subject each to his peculiar and idiosyncratic trials, there is evidence of special inspiration, when we find that without collusion there is perfect concord, without preconcert perfect harmony, that without design or adjustment their notes, not from nearness but relation, should constitute the varied harmonies of heaven? Is it not evidence that there must have been struck, to guide and to develope them, one grand key-note, Christ, and him crucified? In one part of this wondrous book the scholar is addressed in language so exquisitely beautiful, in thoughts so freshly drawn from the depths of our human experience, that he listens, and admires as he listens. In another part, the weary artisan who has returned from his day's work, hears the voice of his Father, and finds that voice his noblest opiate and his sweetest lullaby. In one part the Bible speaks to babes; in another part it speaks to grown men. It draws its imagery from agriculture, from commerce, from politics, from poetry, from nature, and from art;

so that there is not a human being, however strange and peculiar his taste, who shall not find in this wonderful book the common Christianity conveyed in those formulas and figures, and illustrated by those analogies which come home to his heart with the greatest emphasis, and convey most vividly the great truths that belong to his everlasting peace. If a shepherd wants to read his Bible, he will find allusions that will make it familiar to him as household words: if a king sits down on his throne to read the Bible, he will meet with illustrations there that are meet for the inmate of the largest and the most splendid palace; if the artisan, or the sailor, or the soldier, read the Bible, he will see the same truths illustrated by imagery with which he is practically familiar, and so coming home to his heart, with a power so real and so decided, that he will feel that never book spake like this book, as it was said of old of its author, "Never man spake like this man."

But it is very remarkable, that, while there is all that is needed to edify, all that is fitted to charm and to instruct, there is not one word adapted merely to gratify an itching curiosity. If I had been writing a book that I wanted to

be very popular, and if I had been desirous of using the most likely elements, I should have taken care to give responses to the thousand and one curious questions that humanity ever asks and never comprehends. If I had been narrating, even as a human being, and wishing to speak sincerely, that Lazarus rose from the dead, I should have tried to throw in some expressions or sketches of his wonderful experience when separated from the body — not that it would have done man good, but it would have gratified his curiosity, and made my work acceptable. But upon that and kindred subjects the Bible is silent. “Lord, are there many that be saved?” How often have we asked this question! How fine was the answer—“Strive to enter in at the strait gate!” Again, the question is asked, “What shall this man do?” Hear the answer—“What is that to thee? Follow thou me.” The silence of Scripture is sometimes its most thrilling eloquence. The blanks and chasms in Scripture—the questions it leaves unanswered — the problems it bequeaths unsettled—the perplexities it leaves unsolved, are to my mind some of the strongest and brightest credentials that the Bible has God for its author,

truth for its matter, everlasting joy and felicity for its happy issue.

The Bible consists not merely of so many individual books, but of two great divisions. The Old and New Testament are the two great sections of the book called the Bible. What is the difference between them? The Old Testament is a lock with wards and interstices, far more complicated than Chubb or Bramah could contrive; and the New Testament is the exquisitely cut key, which, applied to the lock, completely unlocks it, and opens a door of entrance to the bright vision of light and immortality, clearly brought to view. The Old and New Testament are different portraits of the same great and glorious original. The Old Testament is the portrait seen by moonlight; the New Testament is the same portrait seen by sunlight; the one hazy and dim, but still real; the other bright and illuminated, like a noon-day landscape, on which the minutest and most majestic features may be read and understood by him that runs while he reads.

We have these books in all their integrity. Oh! what a ground of thankfulness to God is a Bible,—unmutilated, unshortened, uncorrupted

The Socinian has tried to abstract from it that which is Divine; the Romanist has added to it that which is human; but we have this book still in its inspired integrity; it is here that one can see a providence in our divisions. While our differences may be the evidences of human weakness, they have been over-ruled by God to be the means of the Bible's preservation. If a Church of England man had tried to put in a word in favour of Episcopacy, the Independent would have pounced upon him and shown the fraud; if the Scotch Churchman had tried to put in a word in favour of his Confession of Faith, the English Churchman would have exposed him in the light of noon-day; if the Baptist had interpolated a word about plunging, the Pædobaptist would have instantly shown it should be sprinkling. Thus our little divisions, which are the evidences of our frailty, have been over-ruled, in the good providence of God, to be the means of keeping in its unmutilated integrity and perfection that blessed book which is the anchorage ground of us all.

The very existence of the Bible has always appeared to me a perpetual miracle. This book, lying upon the pulpit, or upon the desk, or upon

the table, is itself a glorious sign. Suppose there were to come into our presence a man who had lived eighteen hundred years—suppose he had been cast into the sea a dozen times, and was never drowned—suppose arsenic and prussic acid had been administered to him, according to the best prescriptions, and yet he was never poisoned—suppose he had been riddled with bullets, and yet is not numbered with the slain— if that man were to march into a room this day, and to present himself before us, what would be inferred? That God's omnipresence must have been his shield, and God's omnipotence his safety at every moment. This book, the Bible, has been cast into the flames, and it is not burned; it has been thrown into the sea, and it is not drowned; it has been buried in the pestilential notes of Douay, and it has been seized in the bearlike grasp of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and yet it is not crushed. At this day it comes before us in primæval purity and majesty, and thus eighteen centuries demonstrate what Jesus uttered in the first century, "Thy word, O Lord, is truth." But more than this. There are certain books called the classics, written in Greek and

Latin, some of them beautifully written, many of them with intermingling corruptions, and appeals to what is worst and most wicked in our common humanity. Now, it is remarkable that unregenerate human nature would any day prefer a book written by man that will minister to its corruptions, to a book written by God that rebukes those corruptions. Yet the classics, those books that man tried to save, the books that he loved because they prophesied good about him, the books that he laboured, and suffered, and expended to protect and preserve, are all of them mutilated, and many of them totally lost; while this book, which all men hated till they came under its supremacy, and which all men persecuted, because, like the prophet, it prophesied evil concerning them, remains in all its perfection and integrity to this day. Does not this prove that God has been with this book from the beginning until now?

The Church of Rome tells us, we got the Bible from her, and that we ought, therefore, to take her opinion of it, her limits, restrictions, and counsel in the interpretation of it. I suspect, however, that we rather snatched it from her grasp, than got it as a present from her gener-

osity; but at all events, in whatever way we got it, we are certainly most thankful to God that so blind a woman kept in her hand for us so bright a light, and left it for our guidance; and all our regret is, that she was so blind as not to see its light herself. But that same Church turns round and says, "As you got the Bible from us," or, to put it in a phraseology not uncommon, "As you are indebted to the Church for the Bible, you ought to take the Church's interpretation of it." I must demur, "The apostles got the Old Testament from the Jews; but if they had taken the Jews' interpretation of the Bible, they would have joined with them in crucifying the Lord of glory. We will take the Bible from you, but we will not take your interpretation of it." Suppose a will is brought into a court of justice, and that two persons who signed the will are brought forward as witnesses to the genuineness and authenticity of the document: the moment they have given their testimony, one of the witnesses, very communicative and obliging, says to the judge, "My lord, now that we have signed the will, and shown it to be genuine, and handed it to you in this court, an uncorrupted and authentic document, I beg to inform your

lordship that the will leaves 500*l.* to my friend, 250*l.* for myself, and 1000*l.* for somebody else." What would the judge say? "Gentlemen, you are excellent witnesses to the genuineness of the will, but the interpretation of the document you must leave to other parties altogether." If the Church of Rome insists that she did convey the document to us in all its integrity, we say, "We are exceedingly obliged to you; but if you insist that you are therefore to interpret the document, we tell you at once that you come into court simply as witnesses to its genuineness; we cannot accept you in any office in which you have not even presented yourselves, or, at least, in which you ought not to present yourselves." But if she will insist that we shall not have the Bible unless we take her opinion of it, we must tell her that we will dispense with all her services; that we extremely regret it; but that faithfulness to the Author of the Bible necessitates it. For it happens that the Church of Rome was not the only Church during the last eighteen centuries. There was the Greek Church that she separated from, or that she says separated from her, about the sixth century; and there was an Anglo-Saxon Church in England, before a Popish

monk came over. The Romish Church is not the old Church, she is quite mistaken, she gets into the dotage of age, instead of asserting the evidence of age; there was a church here that protested against her novelties long before the days of Hildebrand, and even of Gregory the Great: there was also in Scotland the old Culdee Church, the Syriac Church, and other sections of the Church universal scattered throughout the whole world. I will apply to one of these. Everybody is trying to find out new plans for supplying this great metropolis of ours with pure water; suppose one company came to me, and said, (I do not say they do say so; I am only putting the case hypothetically,) "We will supply your family with water, but we have been persuaded, by careful chemical investigation, that to cover the interior of the conduit pipes with a solution of arsenic is one of the most wholesome practices that the ingenuity of man has ever devised. If you will have water from our company, you must take it in our pipes, use our ducts and our cisterns, or not one drop shall you get for breakfast, dinner, or tea." What would be our answer? "Gentlemen, you have a right to entertain your opinion

about the excellency of arsenic, but I am convinced that it is very poisonous, and if you will not give me water without arsenic, I will apply to another company, that will give me clean water without any such chemical preparation as you have prescribed." So with the Church of Rome. If she will not give us pure water, just as it wells from the fountain of living water, we will turn our backs, and have recourse to other springs that God has dug in his beneficence, and get living water from the ocean and fountain of life, not only without arsenic, but, what is nearly as good, without money and without price.

It is a most interesting and precious fact, that the Bible is now written, or, if we prefer a more modern expression, printed. The commentaries of man vary; they change their form and their hues like the clouds that follow the setting sun; but the great rock remains the same when the shadow is upon it, and after the shadow is gone. The sand-drifts rise and float about the pyramids, but the pyramids remain. The comments and controversies of man, of divines, of ministers, of laymen, have raised the smoke, and stirred the dust; but they have been all outside

the book, which still remains a stereotype, a fixture, like the Rock on which it is spread for reading—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

If the truths of Christianity had been left till now to oral transmission, they had become a complete travesty by this time. Like a snow-ball starting from the mountain-top, it would have rolled downward, accumulating all sorts of rubbish, till it became one frozen and useless mass, lying in the valley below. But, blessed be God, whatever is changed, the Bible is the same; whatever creeds have been mended, the Bible remains; whatever new schools have been instituted, the Bible abides, it is still an accessible fixture; “The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.”

The Bible is pronounced by an apostle to be *θεόπνευστος*, inspired, or breathed into, by God. We do not here enter upon the nature and the limits of inspiration. I am one of those who unfortunately differ from some very great men, to whom I am not fit to hold the candle, who do not believe that every word in this blessed book is the very best for the purpose

that could have been selected—that the Bible is verbally inspired as a record by God; so that when I listen to it I listen as if to the spoken word of God, sounding like a voice amid the gorges of the hills, reverberated in a thousand repetitions, but every echo and reverberation the voice of my God and of my Father.

This holy book is the only image of himself that God has bequeathed to mankind. There is one exception, if I may use the expression, to a part of the second interdict of his law; and it is the Bible, which is the very likeness of God. I could never bear to see pictures of our blessed Lord in churches; I think they are not lawful. When one sees a picture of Christ, what is it really? A man upon the cross; so was the thief at each side of him. I can see one bearing a tree, but not bearing my sins;—I can see an agonized sufferer, but I cannot see the satisfying God;—I can see the outer man, which is the least important, but of the inner man, where the curse was felt, where the satisfaction was made, where the atonement lay, no picture (and I have seen the choicest and noblest on the continent of Europe) can convey to me any just or adequate idea. But

we have one true sketch of Christ, in the 53rd of Isaiah: this is the true crucifix. I wish we could break down all the wooden or priestly ones, and substitute Isaiah's in its stead. The whole Bible itself is the image of Christ, as he is the image of God. It is remarkable that the Church which has worshipped images of wood, and stone, and brass, and silver, and gold,—images of men that were not, images of men that were not worthy to be, and images of men that ought not to have had images at all,—has never, in this rage for image worship, thought of worshipping the likeliest image of God, the Bible! Why? Because if she had bowed down to adore it, its great voice would have said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

This blessed book, while it is thus the voice of God, is yet given in varied strains. If the Bible had been written as a large didactic essay, or a very eloquent oration, it would have been nothing like the book that it now is. The very fact that Paul's style is in it, and that Peter's style, and John's style, and Matthew's style, in all their varieties, are perfectly preserved, but all inspired by the same breath, makes the

Bible come home to my bosom and business with far greater and richer effect. We have all the variations of this harmony, but one keynote; we have manifold instruments to constitute the choir, but all the instruments are pervaded by the breath of the Almighty.

The Bible has been translated. The translation of the Bible is "a great fact," that Protestants glory in. It is one of our deepest convictions, that the Bible should be in a language understood by the people. It was translated by Tindale, in 1530; by Coverdale, in 1535; by Cranmer, in 1539; at Geneva, in 1560; by the bishops, in 1568; and by the celebrated authorized translators, as they are called, the most accomplished scholars and eminent divines of their day, in the year 1611. With all its faults, our translation is matchless; and (what is far better than any eulogium of mine) all the alterations that have taken place in its opponent and rival the Douay version—I have followed them, and do not speak at random—are approximations to the authorized translation of 1611. It is very singular that, wherever there is a difference between the two versions, (although I would engage to prove to any Roman Catholic

that the creed of Pius IV. and the canons of the Council of Trent are wrong, out of his own version,) there is often seen not a little inclination in the Douay translation to help a very crotchetty dogma, that had been established some hundred years before.

We add one more remark, which we should never fail to do when speaking of the defects of our translation,—that if all these defects in our own translation were adjusted, and the words literally and strictly rendered, it would only tell more markedly in favour of evangelical and Protestant Christianity.

This blessed book is circulated the most extensively of all books. It is, by the blessing of God, the cheapest book; it is, in the providence of God, the most widely circulated book. It is found in the soldier's knapsack on the field of battle; it is discovered in the sailor's hammock as his vessel rolls upon the stormy sea; it is to be seen in the pedlar's pack; it is in the cabinet of princes, and in the cottage of peasants; the sun never sets upon its glorious page. Its words have gone out into all the earth; it has been translated into every tongue: its grand promises mingle with the

murmurs of the Black Sea, and with the chimes of the Mediterranean; and increasing numbers are listening every day to that great voice that tells them how to live and be holy, how to die and be happy. Like a stream that has risen from a distant spring, it pursues its course, sometimes amid obstructions, sometimes underground, sometimes above, but always making a belt of rich vegetation, flowers, and verdure beside it, until it sweeps on, reflecting the sheen of palaces and the smoke of cottages, and is lost only in that unsounded ocean towards which we are voyagers, and pilgrims, and travellers. There is not a child upon its mother's knee, or a queen upon her father's throne, that is not a happier child or a happier woman than this book was written, translated, and circulated.

The Bible is perfectly sufficient for all the great purposes for which it was meant. Both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic admit that the Bible is *sufficient*; but both allow that it is not always *efficient*. A book may be sufficient for a great purpose, but it may fail to be efficient; that is, it may be sufficient to make us wise unto salvation, but it may not always actually do so. But the two parties give different solutions: the

Roman Catholic Church says the fault is in the book, and therefore she adds to it, in the hope of making it perfect; the Protestant says the fault is in the reader of the book, and he should pray that God may make him capable of being enlightened by it. The Roman Catholic adds to this sufficient book, in order to make it an efficient one; the Protestant prays to the Author of the book, that he would make the heart of the reader susceptible of the truth, and that thus the sufficient book may become an efficient book. The Protestant says, the way is to open the blind man's eyes; the Roman Catholic says, No, it is to let him remain blind as he is, but to increase the light ten thousand-fold. But all the light in the skies will not make a blind man see. He only that said "Ephphatha" to the ear, and "Be opened" to the eyes, can enable the blindest to see the tiniest light, and even that light will be a guide that will lead him to glory.

The Bible is a most intelligible book. It is the plainest of all books that were ever written. There are parts of it not so plain as others, because there are parts having different purposes from others; but yet if the humblest artisan, the poorest peasant, fail to find the way to

heaven in his Bible, the fault is not in the book, but in his heart, his conscience, or his intellect, which the Author of the book should be appealed to instantly to remove. It is argued, if this be so, why do not all denominations of Christians agree? My answer is, they do agree in the most important things, and it is matter of fact that they differ only in what are called non-essentials, or subordinate things. There cannot be unity in the visible church until there be perfect hearts to read the perfect book: the reason therefore why we come to different conclusions upon matters of detail is, not that the perfect book has ceased to be perfect, but that the once holy heart has lost its polarity, and come to be corrupt and defiled. We have often heard this argument, "Is it not a fact that our laws require lawyers and judges, in order to expound them? and so, by parity of reasoning, the Bible should have a body of men, called priests or presbyters, councils or pope, or whatever you like, who should have the monopoly of the explanation of the book." If this be so, it is a very odd thing that this order of men is not laid down as invested with infallible functions. In the next place, there is one order of men, the

Romish priesthood, the very order that makes this objection, that are the least competent of all to do it; and for the plain reason, that they are not free to interpret honestly. If I submit a law of our most gracious queen to our judges, how do they interpret it? According to its plain and obvious meaning. But if I submit a verse to a Roman Catholic priest, he does not interpret it according to its plain and obvious meaning, because he is bound by a previous law; he is solemnly sworn that he will not interpret it otherwise than in that sense which the Church holds, and by the unanimous consent of the Fathers. If the judges were to say, "We undertake to interpret the laws, but we do so only according to the sense of the President of the French Republic, or according to the authorities published in Berlin or Vienna," I would beg to be excused from their interpretation altogether, and would rather interpret the law myself, according to its plain, grammatical, and obvious sense. The priest of Rome, or any one who takes his place, in using such a parallel as this for argument, should remember that he is bound to interpret Scripture by a previous interpretation, an analogy which I could show you, if

time permitted, is not actually available. There is no order of men appointed in the Bible for this purpose, and therefore we need not expect to succeed in such a mode of understanding the Bible. But, I have said, the fault is in the imperfect heart, not in the perfect book ; and it is a wicked thing to lay the blame upon God, when man fails to understand the Bible. To show how completely this is the case, let me take what might be thought the most intelligible of all documents, an act of parliament. Take, for instance, the last act on the papal aggression. It was first laid before the law-officers of the crown ; they scrutinized it, and weighed every word and syllable according to the limit of their instructions, and drew up the bill. It was afterwards submitted to the House of Commons. After it had been cut and pared, altered and improved, it was pronounced, by the vast majority of six hundred men in the House of Commons, a complete document,—as complete as human skill could make it. It was carried to the House of Lords ; they touched it up a little, improved it here, deducted there, added elsewhere ; and then they said it was complete. The document was submitted to her Majesty ; she

appended her royal signature, and the act is the law of the land. Archbishop Wiseman will say of one clause, it means this; and Dr. Pusey, it means that; and the Bishop of Exeter, it means something else; and Dr. McNeile will assert that it means something different from all three, and Mr. Bennet will differ from all four. In this case, we have a document which, if any document can be pronounced to be so, should be perfect; yet it is not twelve months in existence before the Cardinal drives a coach and four through its clauses. And why? Not that the clause was bad or imperfect, but that some of its interpreters want to gratify their own prepossessions, interests, or convictions, and so set to work to screw and twist and interpret the queen's English, justly or otherwise, into that meaning which chimes in best with their preferences. This is the case with the Bible. You read the Bible, and you take with you your prejudices; and instead of making it pass like a ploughshare through those prejudices, you sift and search and turn it over to get something that will sustain and back you in holding them.

It has been argued against the Bible, that it contains great mysteries. It does contain many

mysteries; but there is a distinction between that which is above our comprehension, and that which is against our comprehension. The doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine above our comprehension; the dogma of transubstantiation is a dogma against our senses and our understanding. We reject the latter, and we accept upon authority the former. But if the Bible had no mysteries in it, it would be without one of the strongest proofs of its Divine origin; for if it be a picture of the infinite, we must expect in it touches that the finite will not be able to grasp; if it be a declaration of the incomprehensible, we must expect passages in it that finite being will not be able to comprehend. Objector to the mysteries in the Bible, are there no mysteries about you? Here is one of the greatest mysteries, how, by a thing called volition in my mind, I can move my hand up and down to the right or to the left! How is it that my volition, that transcendental, airy, undefinable, inappreciable thing, can act upon the muscles of the body? If you object to mysteries in the Bible, and admit the existence of a God, and admit that he is eternal, will you explain to me what eternity is? Can any man explain to me what this means,—

millions, and millions, and millions of years elapsing, and yet I am no nearer to the end and no farther from the beginning than after one single year had elapsed? Do you comprehend that? Do you comprehend what omnipresence is,—a being here, there, everywhere; whose “centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere?” If mysteries in the Bible make you reject the Bible, equal mysteries in natural theology will make you reject the existence of a God, and you will be driven in self-defence to plunge into that vacuum in which man can neither swim, nor stand, nor fly,—that freezing vacuum called Atheism: so that, in my judgment, between accepting the evangelical Christianity of the Bible, and plunging into the vacuum of the Atheist, there is no resting-spot for the sole of the foot of man. Mysteries are in the blades of grass; mysteries are in grains of sand; there is a mystery in every pulsation of the heart. Can you tell me why your heart beats? You can give me no answer. I can answer you, but I must go to that book which you are rejecting because of its mystery. It is the rebound to the touch of the finger of God. It is a most wretched notion that some entertain,

that God wound up all these machines, called men, like watches, set them going, and left them to make the best of their way through the long and dusty road of life. I do not believe this. I believe that God is at every step of my movement, that he meets me at every corner, that he speaks to me in every difficulty, and that he will never leave me nor forsake me; that his providence is over me, as it is over the mightiest and noblest of his creatures. Mysteries! We cannot know anything without coming in contact with mysteries. I believe all heaven will be spent in traversing the known and plunging into the unknown. Eternity will be the unknown, evermore becoming the known as it passes by. I rise in knowledge as I ascend a mountain, the higher I climb the more unseen pinnacles and crags appear. Every truth that comes within the horizon of man's knowledge, brings twenty mysteries in its train, till the more we know, the more we see remains to be known, and the highest scholar, like the highest Christian, becomes the very humblest and lowliest of mankind.

Leslie has written a most admirable book, called "A Short and Easy Method with Deists;" in which he lays down three or four useful general

principles. With regard to miracles, the basis of evidence, he says: 1. That a miracle must be a matter of fact that the senses can judge of. 2. That a miracle must be done publicly in the face of the world. 3. There must be public monuments in remembrance of it. 4. Such monuments must appear at the time of the events.

No false miracle can stand these tests; the miracles of the Bible can. Do you think that Moses could have persuaded half a million of people that they were fed by a powder from the clouds, and that they got water from the rending of a rock, if it had never been true? Or could he have made them accept a book as a Divine record, which stated these things, when in their actual and personal experience they had met with no such things whatever? The credulity required to disbelieve the Pentateuch is ten times greater than all the supposed credulity required to accept it; and it may be proved that the most credulous of all men is the man that believes that the Bible is not the book of God. But what is a miracle? A miracle does not prove the book to be from God: it proves it to be supernatural; it is simply an arrest of the

continuity or order of things, calling upon man to listen. The book itself may be from below, or it may be from above: it must be more than human if nature has been made to pause in order to hear what is said. Its divinity depends on its interior contents. But there is another proof besides miracles; I mean prophecy. The old deists used to say that prophecy was so obscure that they could not understand beginning or end of it; modern deists say it is so plain that it must have been written after the events took place. How contradictory are these philosophical sceptics, these free-thinkers! One has only to look at ancient prophecy and compare it with modern history, to see how interesting and conclusive the evidence is. We find the descendants of Shem, Ham, Japheth, Ishmael, Babylon, Tyre, and Nineveh, not generally, but minutely testifying to the truth of the prophecies of God. The Jews sifted through every land, like seeds through a sieve, but taking root in and incorporated with none; Nineveh recently dug from its grave, (and Nahum said that God would lay it in its grave,) Tyre awakening from its ruins, Babylon emerging from its molten masses, the Seven Churches of Asia, the Arab

in the desert, the Ishmaelite in the wild, the African on his burning sands,—are all standing demonstrations of the inspiration of the writers of Holy Scripture, and the traveller can see for himself that “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

But of all arguments in favour of the truth of the Bible, it seems to me that the experimental one is the best; and he that reads it longest, studies it deepest, prays over it most earnestly, will have a conviction that the Bible is divine, that syllogisms will never shake, that superstition will never waste, and that infidelity will never laugh out of his mind. Let me show what I mean by experimental evidence. Suppose I send out my servant for a bottle of ink; the servant returns with a bottle of Morrell’s best black ink. I ask, how do you know it is ink? The servant answers, “I asked for ink, and the shopman handed a bottle over the counter as ink, and ‘Ink’ is on the label outside.” That would be external evidence. Not satisfied with this, I determine to have internal evidence; and I send the ink to a chemist, who analyses a part of it, and he says it contains so much gall, so much water, so much lamp-black, so much

gum, so much vinegar, and other materials; and he says, these are the component parts of ink. But not satisfied with this, I dip my pen, and write a letter to the friend that I love, and I find that it writes beautifully, and the ink stands jet black and true; it remains days or years undestroyed, undiscoloured in the least degree. This is experimental evidence. We have all these evidences for the book of God. You have historical or external evidence, in witnesses; you have the internal evidence, in the most sifting, searching tests and analysis; and you have the experimental evidence, that you never trusted a promise and that promise failed, you never sought for comfort and that comfort was withheld, you never asked for light and that light was not given you. Ask the peasant on the hills,—and I have asked, amid the mountains of Braemar and Dee-side,—how do you know that the book is Divine, and that the religion you profess is true? You never read Paley? “No, I never heard of him.” You have never read Butler? “No, I have never heard of him.” Nor Chalmers? “No, I do not know him.” You have never read any books on evidence? “No,

I have read no such books." Then how do you know this book is true? "Know it! Tell me that the Dee, the Clunie, and the Garawalt, the streams at my feet, do not run; that the winds do not sigh amid the gorges of these blue hills; that the sun does not kindle the peaks of Loch-na-Gar; tell me my heart does not beat, and I will believe you; but do not tell me the Bible is not Divine. I have found its truth illuminating my footsteps; its consolations sustaining my heart. May my tongue cleave to my mouth's roof, and my right hand forget its cunning, if I ever deny what is my deepest inner experience, that this blessed book is the book of God."

Let us cleave to the Bible, and suffer nothing to be a substitute for it, nothing to supersede it. The Church cannot be our Bible. The Fathers contradict each other, and they will not do. Let us cleave to our Bible, and hold it fast at all hazard; it is the anchorage ground of the Church. That Church will ride out the storms of coming ages whose anchorage ground is the word of God, and the word of God alone. Let us read this book, in the full light of every other portion of the book. I like exceedingly Bagster's Bible, in which he gives such a mass

of references. One diamond best cuts another, and one text best explains another. We shall get immense light from reading the Bible in its own light alone. For instance, if you read one text, "God tempted Abraham;" do not stop there, but go and read another text, "No man is tempted of God;" then you ascertain the former to mean, that God tried Abraham as an experiment, that God tempts no man to sin. You read, in one part, "God repented that he had made man;" to understand that, read another text, "God is not man that he should repent;" thus you understand that God changed his movement according to the prescriptions of his own wisdom, and not that he is moved with human passion. Read the verse, "Work out your salvation;" but do not stop there, or you will become a mere legalist, but read on, "for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." You will then rise to the standard of a real Christian.

Read the Bible, in the next place, impartially. Some read the New Testament and not the Old; some read the promises and not the precepts; some the precepts and not the promises. Read the whole book of God.

Let us read it, in the next place, with special

reference to our personal and practical improvement. Let us read our Bible as sinners seeking to be saved in the name of the Lord Jesus, with constant reference to our personal improvement. When the Israelites were dying in the wilderness, they did not care to try what brass the serpent was made of; they looked at it, and were healed. When their children were fed by manna in the desert, they did not set their wits chemically to analyze it; they ate it, and lived. And when we open our Bible, let us leave critics and commentators behind us, and study God's blessed word in the spirit of impartial investigation and fervent prayer; and He that wrote the book will lead us to the knowledge of the book, for, unlike the authors of other books, the Author of this is always near to explain himself.

The Bible is a book for the times. It exposes all error as it emerges, and contains all seasonable truth. It finds the human race like a lost ship upon a stormy and unknown sea, it presents the light that leads them to heaven. It relights in the human bosom the lamp of truth, rekindles in the heart the love of God, restores to the individual the sabbath of the soul. It gives dignity to the meanest duty, and

it tells us of forgiveness for the greatest sin. It sets obedience in the bosom of benedictions, and clothes its severest precepts in precious promises. To the grandeur of the man it adds the glory of the saint. It is a book not made by a people, but a book that made a people, and will people heaven with its noblest and best inhabitants. The Bible is the fountain of our asylums, our charities, our hospitals, and the thousands and thousands of means of benefiting the poor, the needy, and the destitute. How much are we indebted to that book! It consecrates our weddings, it furnishes names for our children, it hallows the green sod beneath which the ashes of our dead repose. Thousands upon thousands declare that to the Bible, under God, they are indebted for their richest and their deepest joys. I have no fear of the Bible perishing. Sickness will not let it go; sorrow will not let it go; affliction will not part with it. Man's aching heart will cling to the Bible as the only comforter, in a world in which there are such miserable comforters besides. Other books are popular for a day, but they are outstripped by the discoveries of man; but the Bible is as fresh to-day as it was when it was

written. Time writes no wrinkles upon the brow of the word of God. In other books the discoveries of to-day render foolish the statements of yesterday. We are obliged to offer excuses for Shakspeare, and to say, it was the age that made him write so. We must offer apologies for Plato and for Cicero, arising from the circumstances in which they were placed. The Bible disdains apologies; it asks for none, it needs none. The age is behind it—never yet has got before it. From Jerusalem, as from a distant capital of the world, has gone forth a book that has been the delight of the wise, the joy of the wretched, the salvation of the guilty, the hope of the dying; the ornament, the dignity, the glory, of the human race.

“Yon cottager who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,—
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
A title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh, happy peasant! Too unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the sure reward:
He, praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come;
She, never heard of half a mile from home:
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers;
She, saved in the simplicity of hers.”

CHAPTER II.

GENESIS AND GEOLOGY.

“ Sad error this, to take
The light of nature rather than the light
Of Revelation for a guide. As well
Prefer the borrowed light of earth's pale moon
To the effulgence of the noon-day sun.”

“ Science falsely so called.”—1 TIM. vi. 20.

“ Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea ?”—JOB xxxviii. 16.

THE subject I am about to discuss in this chapter, is “Genesis and Geology.” Genesis is the first book in the Bible; called in the Septuagint version, ΒΙΒΛΙΟΝ ΓΕΝΕΣΕΩΣ, or the book of the generation or creation of things; called in the original in the words of the book itself, and by the Jews who adopted it, בְּרֵאשִׁית, *Bereshith*, or, in the beginning. Geology is the science that deals with the contents of the earth on which we tread, the collocation and arrangement of these contents, and the facts they divulge and the lessons they teach.

In speaking of Genesis and Geology, we start with this clear preliminary conviction: Genesis is absolutely true; there is no room for scept-

ticism as to its inspiration; it is pronounced by infallibility to be part of the Scripture, given by inspiration of God. Genesis, therefore, must be true; upon its own evidences it rests, and by facts and proofs and evidences peculiar to itself, it can be demonstrated to be perfectly, eternally, infallibly true.

Genesis is a revelation from God; Geology is a discovery of man. A revelation from God can be augmented by God only; a discovery by man may be improved, matured, advanced, ripened, progressively, till the end of the world. We therefore assume that Genesis is perfect beyond the possibility of contradiction or improvement by us; and we equally assume that Geology, because the discovery of man, and the subject of the investigation of man, may be improved by greater experience and more profound acquaintance with those phenomena, which lie concealed in the bosom of the earth, waiting for man to evoke, explain, and arrange them. I am sure, therefore, that Genesis, as God's word, is beyond the reach of the blow of the geologist's hammer; or the detection of a single flaw by microscope or telescope; it will stand the crucible of the chemist; and the severer the

ordeal to which it is subjected, the more pure, resplendent, and beautiful it will emerge, indicating its origin to be from above, and its issue to be the glory of God, and the supreme happiness of mankind. Geology has before now retraced its steps, Genesis never. Before now it has been discovered, that what were thought to be facts incontrovertible were fallacies. It is found that phenomena described and discussed as true, were mistakes and misapprehensions, which maturer investigations have disposed of; and therefore I am not speaking dogmatically, and without reason, when I say, that while Genesis must be true, Geology, having already erred, may err again, and some of its very loudest assertions, made rashly by those who have least acquaintance with its data, may yet be proved to be wrong. But certain facts in it are now beyond all dispute. Let Geology and Genesis be alleged to clash, and the discovery from the depths of the earth contradict the text from the page of the Bible; in such a case, I would submit first these questions: Are you sure that there is a real contradiction between the fact of Geology and the text of the Bible, or is it only a contradiction between the fact

discovered by science, and the *interpretation* that you put upon the text of the Bible? In the next place, if there be in any instance contradiction between a clear text of the Bible and a supposed fact or discovery made by the geologist, my inference, and without hesitation, is, that the geologist must have made a mistake, that Moses has made none: and therefore the advice we give to the geologist, is, not to say God's work beneath contradicts God's word without, but just to go back again, read more carefully the stony page, excavate more laboriously in the subterranean chambers of the earth, and a maturer acquaintance with the facts of science may yet elicit the desirable result, that there is harmony where we thought discord, and perfect agreement where to us there seemed only discrepancy and conflict. We have instances of the possibility of some deductions of science being wrong in other departments of it. Astronomy was once quoted as contradicting the express declarations of the word of God; maturer acquaintance with it has proved its perfect coincidence. Again, the hieroglyphics on the banks of the Nile, as deciphered by Young and Champollion, were instanced to prove a

far greater age of the human race than that declared in the Bible; but subsequent investigation showed that the hieroglyphics were wrongly interpreted, not that God's word was untrue. The traditions of the Chinese were viewed as upsetting the records of the Mosaic history, but subsequent investigation have proved that those were wrong, and that God's word is true.

The Bible, whether we take it in Genesis or in the Gospels, contains no error; it has not a single scientific error in it. Yet it was not designed to teach science; but wherever it touches the province of science, it touches so delicately that we can see the main object is to teach men how to be saved, while its slight intimations of scientific principles or natural phenomena have in every instance been demonstrated to be exactly and strictly true. If the Bible said in any part of it, as the ancient philosopher alleged, that there were two suns, one for the upper hemisphere and the other for the lower, then science would prove that Scripture was wrong; or if the Scripture said, as the Hindoos believe, that the earth is a vast plain, with concentric seas of milk, honey, and sugar, supported by an elephant, and that the earthquakes and convulsions

of the globe are the movements of that elephant as he bears it on his back,—then science would have proved that to be absurd; and if Scripture had asserted it, such assertion would be demonstrably untrue. But the striking fact is that you find no such assertion, nor anything approaching such assertions in the Bible. How comes it to pass, then, that Moses has spoken so purely and truly on science where he does speak, and has been silent where there was such a provocative to speak, his very silence being as significant as his utterance? How happens it that Moses, with no greater education than the Hindoo or the ancient philosopher, has written his book, touching science at a thousand points, so accurately, that scientific research has discovered no flaws in it; and has spoken on subjects the most delicate, the most difficult, the most involved; and yet in those investigations which have taken place in more recent centuries, it has not been shown that he has committed one single error, or made one solitary assertion which can be proved by maturest science or the most eagle-eyed philosopher to be incorrect, scientifically or historically? The answer is, that Moses wrote by the inspiration

of God, and therefore what he writes are the words of faithfulness and of truth.

It is an interesting fact, I may state at the outset, that as we grow in our acquaintance with the facts of Geology, we grow in our conviction of their perfect coincidence with the truths of Genesis. Genesis is God's tongue telling us what things are; Geology is God's finger pointing out the portraits of things that are: God's voice is audible in Genesis; God's hand is visible in Geology. The first, that is, God's word, is perfect, uninjured by a flaw; the second, or God's work, is imperfect, tainted by sin, and injured by a thousand incidents and occurrences, which make it not so clear and perspicuous as it was when it came from the hand of God, and was pronounced by him to be very good.

The first great fact that I will deal with, and the one that really involves the whole subject, is the real or supposed antiquity of the earth. Is the earth six thousand years old and no more, or is it older? The common interpretation of Genesis says, it is six thousand years old; the discoveries of Geology prove to my mind incontestably, that the component material struc-

ture of this globe, and much that is under the outer crust in this globe, are, it may be, hundreds of thousands of years old. I believe that this earth is not merely six thousand years old; the last collocation of it on its upper surface is of that age; the last arrangement of its surface is so, but the materials of the globe, the strata that are below, of which I will give you satisfactory evidence, demonstrate that it is not thousands, but hundreds of thousands of years old: and yet I am abundantly satisfied there is no contradiction between these, the last discoveries of Geology, and the first text of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Supposing, then, we penetrate the surface of the globe, or the crust that surrounds it, like the skin of an orange or the shell of an egg, we find as we descend, successive strata, or, if I may use a more homely expression, cakes of different formations composed of different substances, lying on each other for some nine miles in depth, by what geologists call superposition; the one regularly and always (except as we account for it on other principles) lying above the other. You know what an onion is; it

is composed of successive coverings; we take off one complete, then another, then another; that onion, if each of its laminæ were only of a different substance from the other, would be in structure almost a complete picture of the exterior crust of the globe. First of all, and lowest of all, we have the primitive rock, which we call granite, the stone of which Waterloo Bridge is built, found in Aberdeenshire and in parts of Cornwall; then above the granite, the gneiss; above that, are the Silurian beds, called so from the ancient inhabitants of that part of our country, the Siluri. We have then the old red sandstone, the coal formation, and, as the last, the alluvial deposit, in which remains of the human race are found. This order is always preserved except there be an interruption, or an irruption, or break, by some great convulsion or slow process in some past history of the globe. Many of these specific formations you will notice above the granite, are composed of what geologists call *laminæ*, that is, successive leaves deposited one above the other, giving proof that the one cake was hardened by long lapse of years before the next cake or lamina

was deposited on it, and became solidified by the same process. You will find too, if you look at the lower lamina, or the lower cake, and upon its upper surface you will see, evidences of the ripple of the waves, washing it, wasting it, and rubbing it. You will find again upon the same upper surface, the foot-prints of birds, the foot-steps also of beasts, and the marks of leaves; and these impressions upon the *upper* surface of the lower one, are exactly transferred to the *lower* surface of the next higher, or upper cake, that must therefore have been deposited softly and slowly upon it, showing that the upper surface of the lower lamina or cake, become hardened, had been the scene of long traffic, like a turnpike road, and then the immense ocean above deposited its detritus, or its mud, (as you may call it,) very gently and gradually upon the upper surface of the said lower and long-hardened stratum, and received the impression just as the printer's page receives the impression from the types, thereby proving that a long period intervened before the upper laminæ fell, and were formed upon the lower, and became hardened with time. That one fact indicates immense intervals,

because it shows that the lower surface had been trodden by animals, washed by the waves, hardened by the lapse of years, and only after it had been completely hardened did another stratum fall down upon it in a soft and plastic state, and assumed impressions on its lower side, from the hardened upper of the leaf below, and ultimately it also hardened, and became the basis again of other deposits.

In the third place, there are formations consisting of very different materials, some derived from the older rocks, others from processes of very slow progress. To give an illustration, granite is, as I said, the primitive, the lowest rock; and next above that is the gneiss. This is composed of exactly the very same materials as the granite. Upon your looking at the granite you will see the felspar, mica, and quartz, composing it, are beautifully mingled, and blended, and crystallized, sparkling like diamonds; but if you look at the gneiss, or, as it is called, the whinstone, you will see that the same materials—mica, felspar, and quartz—have in its case been reduced into a complete powder, which geologists in their technical language call *detritus*, and has afterward become

consolidated. This gives evidence that the upper surface of the granite had been ground down by the washing of waters, or by some ceaseless, restless process, and the detritus of the granite thus made had been mixed with the mighty ocean above, and afterwards gradually deposited, and slowly hardened into what is called whinstone, or gneiss. This one fact is proof that a long period must have elapsed, before there was worn off so much dust or detritus from the hard granite, as could thus be deposited and formed into immense blocks of superposition gneiss, hundreds of feet in thickness; irresistible evidence, therefore, that long geological periods must have intervened between the granite formation and the next above it.

Let us now turn to the Silurian formations, as they are called; these consist of coral. Everybody knows what coral is—the secretion of very minute insects. It has been actually ascertained, that the beds are formed by these small insects, at the rate of about six inches in a hundred years. Now if we find coral beds hundreds of feet in thickness, and as we know the rate at which the coral insect makes its formations, we can easily cal-

culate it must have taken hundreds of thousands of years to form some of the vast strata that are beneath the crust on which we tread, and that compose the substance and mass of this globe. It is absurd to say the coral was created, it is clearly the work of insects.

Again, the coal formations were once gigantic forests, and the coal that we now burn in our fires was once pine, or oak, or beech, or some sort of wood, which has been, by some great convulsion, and by moisture, and heat, and age, turned into that carbonaceous or carboniferous substance, we commonly call coal. That coal must have occupied immense periods in its formation from wood into coal, is obvious from the nature of the process. One of the readiest proofs of this is, that a peat-moss is a coal-bed in its infancy. There is one peat-moss near Stirling, which can be proved to be two thousand years since it was a forest, from certain Roman remains found in it. It is in the process of becoming carbonized, and would probably take ten thousand years more to be turned into coal. We, therefore, argue that these coal formations prove, incontestably, additional to all I have said, that the globe of

which they form a part, has been filling up, and shaping itself, under the presidency of Him who made and governs it, for hundreds and thousands, ay, tens of thousands of years !

Another proof of the antiquity of the earth may be taken from the chalk cliffs. All, or many of us, have visited Ramsgate, Margate, and Dover. What do you think those chalk cliffs are? Just vast masses of dead sea-insects and shells, turned into that alkaline powder, which we term chalk. The microscope of the philosopher has been turned upon it, and it is now matter of demonstration. It is absurd to say, these vast masses were thus created. I was lately at Ramsgate, and spent a few hours minutely examining these cliffs. You see a long line of flints, then a mass of white chalk, then flints again, then an immense mass of white chalk. Just think that these gigantic banks of chalk were all living, swarming creatures, that must have been deposited from water, and that you have them now in their petrified state ! The only thing that has puzzled geologists are the layers of flint-stones. They cannot explain how it comes to pass, that in every chalk cliff we see successive parallel

and horizontal lines of flint stones, three or four feet from one another. How these nodules of flint came into that position, geologists have been unable to determine, and no conclusion has been arrived at, to give satisfaction to those who are competent to investigate that question.*

Again, some of these formations, while in the fixed order of superposition I have mentioned, (as the gneiss lying above the granite, and the fossiliferous strata above it,) sometimes dip—that is to say, you find that the stratum does not lie always perfectly horizontal, but dips down, and sometimes you find an immense mass, by some great convulsion, thrown up as if it had shot up, and standing almost perpendicular. Now when you find a large mass of granite thus driven up, and when you perceive afterwards that the next stratum, evidently, was gradually deposited by the water upon it, till it has become entirely covered, you infer it must have taken an immense cycle of years to deposit so much sand, dust, or

* It has been conjectured lately, what perhaps we shall be able to prove, that these flints were originally sponges, and if so, it will strengthen the evidence we are collecting.

mud around it, while the whole gradually solidifies, so as ultimately to cover this mass, and become solid rock. Suppose one of the pyramids of Egypt were in this situation, and the clouds were to shower down sand, you can conceive what a long time it would take till the whole pyramid was covered by it, and how much more to enable wet and heat to harden it. We find that very process to have taken place in cases of the under strata being driven upwards, and the upper strata lying horizontally deposited on them, thus indicating the vast periods which must have elapsed till the latter strata were complete and hard. In other words, to close this part of my subject by the interesting remarks of Professor Sedgwick, "Everything indicates a very long and a very slow progression, one creation flourishing and performing its part, and gradually dying off as it has so performed it, and another actual creation of new beings, not derived as progeny from the former, gradually taking its place—again this new creation succeeded by a third; nothing *per saltum*; all according to law; all bearing the impress of mind, of a great dominant will, at the bidding

of which all parts have their peculiar movement, their periods of revolution, their rise and fall." On many of these strata, I may observe, are found rounded fragments, rounded by ceaseless attrition, and fragments invariably from the rock below.

Having thus noticed these strata, from the granite up through the fossiliferous strata, to what is called the alluvium, I observe, that it is in this alluvium, or upper mud, that lies upon the surface of the earth, that we find the remains of man. But how interesting is this fact! no remains of man, or the dynasty of man, or of the tools, the possessions, or the occupations of man, are to be found in the strata to which I have turned your attention hitherto. They are confined wholly and entirely to the upper alluvial strata, only comparatively a very few feet in depth; proving, in the most incontestable manner, this one fact, as it is asserted in Genesis, that while whole races of living creatures existed and were extinguished prior to man, man is of recent origin, or just about six thousand years old — the very age assigned in Genesis,—Geology thus calling from its depths, "O God, thy word is true!"

To touch more immediately upon the statement contained in the first chapter of Genesis, we read there these remarkable words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now, in looking at this, just notice the fact, that all that this first verse does, is simply to reveal the fact that God created the heavens and the earth. It does not describe any antecedent dynasty, or any past or extinguished race; because the Bible was written not to teach geology, for we can discover its phenomena by science; it was written to teach us all that relates to ourselves, all that is fitted to enlighten us in the way that leads to happiness and to heaven, leaving for us, and for after ages, to learn more than the greatest philosophers have been able to discover in the ages that are past. The first verse of Genesis, in other words, has no reference to the *chronology* of creation, but simply to the *fact* of creation. All that the first verse asserts is, that God made the heavens and the earth. It does not say, that he made it 6000 years ago, or 10,000, or 20,000. It asserts the creatorship of God, and the creatureship of what we see, and nothing before. Then it proceeds to give the

history that succeeds. The word which is translated "created," is very remarkable; it is the word *bara*. I know it is open to controversy and discussion, but you will find this to be almost invariably the case, that *bara* is employed where it is implied that God created something out of nothing, and that *aasah*, another Hebrew word, is employed when he uses the instrumentality of others in producing anything. For instance, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" that is *Bereshith bara Elohim*, &c.

But in that passage, "God made Joseph father," &c., it is *aasah*, and in the passage, "God made Jordan a border," it is *aasah*. The idea of *constituted* belongs to one verb, the idea of *original creation* is implied and involved in the other. And, very remarkably, both words are used in reference to *man*. It is said of him, God created (*bara*) man, and it is said also of him, God made (*aasah*) man. Why is this? First, man was a new creation, and therefore *bara* is the proper word to describe him; and whilst he was a new creation he was created out of the dust, and therefore *aasah* became also an appropriate word.

But let us look at the passage itself, and it is, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." I have said this is the fact of creation, not the era or date of creation. In the beginning, means eternity, for in the first chapter of John it is said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And it is said, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now most Christians have taken the poet's commentary on that passage, instead of accepting it in its plain and unequivocal sense. They have supposed that the earth was one vast, surging, heaving chaos—that God first of all created a chaos, as the initial step, and then he made that chaos assume the beautiful shape of hill and dale, and river, and sea, and stream, that we now see upon it. But really this is not the meaning of the passage, for at the second verse you will find that the earth existed, that the sea existed, and that day and night existed. The language of it is, that "the earth was without form and void, and darkness," that is, night, or the absence of light, "was upon the face of the deep, and the

Spirit of God moved upon the waters, and he said, Let there be light, and there was light. And he called the light day, and the darkness he called night." Now how are day and night produced? Day is produced by one hemisphere being exposed to the sun, and night by the other half not being exposed to the sun; and therefore the earth must have been revolving on its axis at the very time that poets described it in a state of chaotic confusion. But you say, "The words are, 'the earth was without form and void.' Does not that prove that chaos is the proper name for it?" I answer, No; for the very same language is applied by Jeremiah in reference to circumstances which took place long after, where he says, "I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, that they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger." Now here the Hebrew words, *Thohu and Vohu*, translated by us, "without form and

void," are applied to a state superinduced by man; and therefore you may translate this second verse thus, "And the earth was emptiness and desolation." Then it is said, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water;" and that expression, "moved," indicates a process, and it is very significant. It is said elsewhere, that the Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove. This text alludes to the third person in the adorable Trinity. The phrase is that which is predicated of a dove, and might be translated fairly, without deviating from the text, "And the Spirit kept fluttering, after the manner of a dove, upon the face of the water." You have, then, in this passage, the earth revolving upon its axis; you have day and night existing in it; and then you have the sentence enunciated by God, "Let there be light." Now mark the difference. When he created, it is said, *Bara Elohim*; but when it speaks of light introduced, it does not say, *Bara*, "and he created a light;" but it says, *Yehi Owr*, "let light be seen." This is not the creation of light. I believe that light had existed thousands of years before; but it is, "let the light, obscured by the vapours or evaporation of the moisture of

the earth, or from any other explicable and reasonable cause—let that light, obscured and hidden, now emerge and appear.” But for poets to sing as if God had created light at this moment, is to stretch poetic imagination till it occupies the place of an interpreter of the word of God, and so ceases to be of use.

Again, God said, “Let there be a firmament.” You ask what that is. The word here employed simply means, let there be expansion; let there be a space dividing the water of the clouds (for a cloud is simply water in the shape of steam) from the water in the ocean and the river, and thus the land would instantly come under drainage, if you will allow the expression, and become fit for herb and flower and fruit, by the waters rushing from it, and forming the mighty ocean—“let it bring forth herb,” that is, let it be fitted for it, “for man and for beast.” Then it says, “God made two great lights.” Now here the word used is not *Owr*, which I told you signifies light; nor is *bara* used, which means create, but *aasah*, to constitute; he constituted two great lights: the word is not light, the Hebrew word for which is *Owr*; but *maowroth* is the Hebrew used for the sun and moon; and literally trans-

lated it is, "He constituted the sun and moon two torch-carriers, or light-bearers, to the earth and the human family." God no more made the sun and moon then, in the sense of creating them, than he created the rainbow when he appointed it as the symbol and sign to Noah that another deluge should never occur. It seems to me plainly evident, that the record of Genesis, when read fairly, and not in the light of our prejudices,—and, mind you, the essence of Popery is to read the Bible in the light of our opinions, instead of viewing our opinions in the light of the Bible, in its plain and obvious sense,—falls in perfectly with the assertions of geologists, that the globe may be hundreds of thousands of years of age. All that is asserted, is God's primal creation and his subsequent arrangement of its surface, or his furnishing of the house for the habitation and comfort of man, leaving all that existed long prior to that to be discovered by the labours of science, his word only undertaking and professing to teach things that belong to our everlasting peace.

But there is one subject which I confess is a difficult one, and it is the only difficult one. Some geologists, I know, may smile at my pro-

posed solution, and some of my hearers may be dissatisfied, but I cannot help it; I only state my own belief, the result of my own reading. The difficulty is this:—Geology proves that death existed in our globe long prior to six thousand years ago. I say the evidence to my mind, from reading—from careful and dispassionate reading upon this very point—conveys an irresistible impression that death existed in our globe hundreds of thousands of years ago, very long before the present surface, configuration, and arrangement of the earth on which we now live. Now, the question is, how to reconcile this with what seems to be plainly asserted in the word of God, that death is the result of sin, that man sinned, and therefore death has passed upon all. I assert this, that, explain it as you like, no honest man, reading the New Testament, or the Old Testament, can avoid concluding, that if there had been no sin, there never could have been any death. How then do we explain the fact that death did exist in the lower races prior to the creation of man? For instance, in addition to millions of dead creatures, we find one of these Saurian monsters excavated from the depths of the earth with a smaller animal in its

jaws, having crushed it just as it had seized its prey. We find others, with the remains of smaller creatures in their stomachs, eaten, but not fully digested when death seized upon them. We find, too, remains of animals furnished with what are called carnivorous teeth. The ox's teeth are called graminivorous, because fitted for the mastication of grain or grass; the teeth of lions, of cats, and of dogs, are called carnivorous, because made to feed upon flesh, to tear and devour. Now we find, I say, in these ancient remains, clear proofs of carnivorous races that lived upon flesh, and must have fed upon other animals. Anybody who will read carefully what has been stated, and the facts that prove it, must come to the same conclusion. Several theories have been invented to explain this. A distinguished minister—distinguished for his piety as well as for his scientific attainments—has alleged that man was originally designed or made capable of dying, and meant to die, and would have died, but that his death would be contingent upon his eating or non-eating of the forbidden tree; that is, so constituted that he dies if he eats of that fruit, but if he had not eaten of it, though still mortal, the

sentence would have been suspended, and he would not have died. Another theory is that of Jeremy Taylor—that man and all animate creatures were meant to die, whether man had sinned or not, and that in case of his never having fallen, death would have been a beautiful transference, like the twilight, or, as they call it in the north of Scotland, gloaming; where the twilight of evening blends almost imperceptibly with the twilight of the next morning—that man would have been gradually translated without the pang, the agony, and the shame of dying. But the third idea, which I really think is the right one, is that man was not meant constitutionally to die; that wherever death is, there is the projected shadow of that great sin that crept into the world, and dragged down on us with it all our misery and all our woe. And I believe, at the same time, that the animals created after Adam, and constituting what geologists call our dynasty, were not originally designed to die, and that their carnivorous structure was an anticipatory arrangement, and that in every case sin and death are inseparably connected. That the lower animals are involved in man's sin, is plain in many instances

of the Bible. At the flood, for instance, the animals were all punished and destroyed because man had sinned. We have repeated instances in the Bible, of the lower races suffering because of man's transgressions. I believe that is but the continuance of a law which began with man's fall, and that in consequence of man's fall it is literally true, as the apostle asserts, that the whole creation groans and travails, waiting to be delivered, and that a day of emancipation will come. I am one of those who believe that the brute creation are not in their normal state; that the poor horse, over-worked in the omnibus, is not where he was meant to be; that the poor bird, devoured by the hawk, is exposed to a contingency superinduced by sin. I believe, no less surely, that when the lord of creation fell, the whole of his dynasty fell with him; and that when creation's lord shall receive the reins of creation again into his hands, his whole dynasty will be elevated and redeemed with him.

Still we fall back upon the question, "How happens it that death was before man fell?" My humble solution is this: First, Geology does not show death to have occurred prior to the creation of man in the case of a single animal con-

stituting the creation of the first six days of the week ; secondly, Geology does not adduce one instance of the remains of man amidst the fossiliferous remains of previously existing races ; thirdly, the amount of its disclosure is this, then, that death takes place amongst the peculiar race of animals that existed prior to the creation of man. But as the Bible asserts that death is the result of sin, we are thrown back upon this question, " Is there any record of any sin having occurred prior to man's creation ? " We find God speaking to Adam of sin, as if Adam knew what sin was, and also of death, as if he had some idea of what death meant ; and we find that the great representative and agent of sin, called " that old serpent," Satan, walked the world, had access to its fairest spots, and tempted man ; and we read in the Epistle of Jude of " the angels who kept not their first estate : " now, I do not assert that the angels' sin was the cause of the death that existed prior to Adam's creation, but I do assert that we have the fact that sin occurred prior to man's creation ; and it does not seem unreasonable, or contrary to analogy, to say, that the disorganization of all animal being, prior to Adam's creation, may be

the rebound and the result of the sin of those angels who kept not their first estate, and rebelled against God, whose residence may have been this very earth, prior to its fitting up for the dynasty of man.

I have thus, briefly, looked at that difficulty, the existence of death prior to the creation of man. I will now draw such instructions as it seems to me the investigations we have been pursuing fairly teach.

First, then, it appears, that all the discoveries of recent science, instead of contradicting the plain assertions of Scripture, either leave them untouched in their own inspired supremacy, or cast an indirect, but illustrative, light upon them. Secondly, we have the most irresistible proof of what is called the non-eternity of the globe. You will recollect, that when one of the great Christian naturalists affirmed that there were all the traces of design in our globe, and therefore the proofs of a Creator, infidels replied, "It has ever been so." By this they asserted the eternity of the globe, and therefore got rid, by one extravagant assertion, of a clear and impressive evidence of a designing, wise, and glorious Being. But now Geology has po-

sitively discovered whole races of animals were at once extinguished, and forthwith there started a new race, totally unconnected with the previous ; then that new race was extinguished, and succeeded by another new race. In other words, we can just prove, as plainly as if we saw God making worlds, that God has interposed in the history of this globe some twenty times, and created at once, by a fiat of omnipotent power, successive races of dynasties of living beings. We have, therefore, in that fact, irresistible proof that the globe is not eternal, but, on the contrary, the scene of successive creations, and that God has interposed again and again with acts of creative power.

We receive from Geology the most powerful evidence of the existence of God. I have shown that there are proofs of creative power interposing and starting new races ; and such creative acts are, of course, irresistible proofs of a Creator, who originated and produced them ; nothing, to my mind, is more absurd or extravagant than the notion of that man who has the moral hardihood of heart, and the obscuration of intellect and common sense, to stand up and assert the monstrous paradox, the unscientific

dogma, that there is no God and Governor of heaven and earth. I was amazed the other day, when an individual wrote to me, to find the very first announcement of his letter to be, "I am an atheist." That was to me a perfect key to all the contents of the document. He not only said that he was an atheist, but he gave me the advantages of his reasons for being so. I read them, and I wrote back that I had generally found Atheism to be a fog, that originates in the heart a conviction for the mind, determining to get rid of the idea of God, because the deeds of the life are evil ; but I wrote that I could compliment my correspondent on the perfect absence of this, as, judging from his reasons, it was weakness of intellect on his part, and not badness of heart, that made him come to such conclusions.

Another interesting lesson is taught us by Geology — that God has taken an interest in this globe, the most continuous, the most parental. The infidel's objective query has often been, that as God has thousands of orbs of the richest splendour, of which he is the Author, and on the riches of which he sits enthroned, how can God give such attention to

this minute speck, which he could expunge from the orbs of the universe, and which would be no more missed than would a grain of sand from the sea-shore, as to send the Son of God to die for it? This argument has been well answered by the late Dr. Chalmers and others. There are a hundred globes or orbs, and there is one truant orb; God will leave the ninety-nine orbs that need no restoration, and will come on the wings of love to restore this prodigal orb; just as the mother who has one child a prodigal, and seven at home, happy, good, and obedient, when she hears the wind blow and the storms beat, will think far more, and far more deeply, of the prodigal upon the open ocean, than of her seven at her fireside, under the shelter of her roof at home. And if there were no analogy at all, Geology proves in the history of the globe, that God has interposed in this globe so often in the sovereign exercise of creative acts; and the Bible records that he has crowned his interposition with the most glorious of them all, redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The discoveries of Geology extinguish for ever the theory advocated in a well-known book, called the "Vestiges of Creation." It is most

remarkable how the writer of this book has been overwhelmed. The author of the "Vestiges of Creation" alleges that certain nebulæ in the sky consist of a certain fire-mist, which has been gradually spinning itself into orbs, which gradually become bigger and bigger. Lord Rosse turned his telescope to these nebulæ, and found them to consist of clusters of orbs fully formed. Then again, the idea of the author of the "Vestiges" is, that man is the development of a monkey, that the monkey is the embryo man, so that if you keep a baboon long enough it will develop itself into a man. Hugh Miller states what geologists have discovered, that each successive dynasty (I use the technical geological phrase) was created at its maximum of perfection, and that degradation, not elevation, has been the law of existence. We find no instances of transformation of races in Geology. How can you suppose, I ask, that an ourang-outang can ever develop itself into a man? The ankle of the ourang-outang, for instance, is rotatory; man's ankle is a simple joint that moves forward and backward, and is meant for walking. Man's foot is a beautiful arch, and he is meant to support himself by it erect; but the

ourang-outang has a prehensile foot, that is, long fingers meant for clasping boughs of trees, and leaping from branch to branch—the evidence of a brute, not the basis of the development of a man. But suppose that the ourang-outang's hairy hand were to develop itself into the beautiful hand of a lady, and its prehensile foot were ultimately to become the handsome arched foot, and its head to change into the fine countenance of man; which part of the ourang-outang would develop itself into the grand imagination of Shakspeare, the great intellect of Sir Isaac Newton, the mighty genius of a Bacon? Where are the elements of such a development as this? Echo must answer only, "Where?" But Geology discovers no half monkey, half man, half one race, and half another, in any of the earth's archives, but distinctly defined and independent and distinct races.

We have in the disclosures of Geology the most triumphant evidence of the possibility of a miracle. Hume, the celebrated atheistic philosopher, says that a miracle is impossible, and on this account, that we have no evidence of a miracle. Dr. Newman says, on the contrary, that his church is so full of miracles that

it is like an electric jar, charged, and only needing to be exposed to the outward world to explode with all sorts of brilliant prodigies. We take the moderate course, and we say, miracles have been when there was a necessity for them ; and we say, the possibility of miracles is proved by the fact revealed on the stony page in the excavations of the globe, that God has stepped in again and again, and created races, and left evidences of that creation which are unmistakable upon the surface and contents of the globe.

In the next place, we have in Geology the refutation of the theory asserted by men in St. Peter's days, and asserted by men in our day, that "all things continue as they were since the beginning." They do not continue as they were ; they have changed ; God has changed them again and again, and they will be changed one day, when what now is shall undergo its last baptism, and the earth shall emerge all beautiful, and end, as it began, with paradise.

And, in the next place, every discovery we have in Geology refutes the idea that life can in any shape, by any chemical combination of material elements, be originated. It shows that

life is the gift of God, and that nothing else but God's power begat it.

I notice also, that all the discoveries of Geology show, amid traces of judgment, evidences of death, and intimations of sin—that every step in the formation of the globe has, more or less, been beneficent and benevolent to man. For instance, the coal that took thousands of years to form—the lime, which is composed of dead sea-shells and insects—the ores of iron—the gold and the silver thrown out in veins and interstices in the rocks—these are all found to be necessary to man. If you had no lime, you would have no flux for melting the metal; if you had no coal, you could have no fire to melt the metal; and if you had no metal, you would not require lime and coal; and yet all three are generally contiguous.

Lastly, Geology tells us very plainly, that all the elements of that great catastrophe predicted by Peter in the 3rd chapter of his Second Epistle, are at this moment ready. It is well ascertained, that Fahrenheit's thermometer rises one degree every forty-five feet we penetrate into the earth, and that if you were to descend sixty miles, the heat at that depth would be

so intense that it would melt the hardest flints and the most solid rock ; and that this globe is therefore a cooled crust, composed of the granite and the fossiliferous strata, and that underneath at the heart is one molten and surging sea of fire ; that the volcanoes are the safety-valves which prevent the earth's crust being riven into atoms, and all humanity perishing. A day will come when God will remove the restrictions, when the elements shall " melt with fervent heat." Oh ! may we, seeing all these things must be dissolved, be found in the happy company, and amid the blessed group, of them who, through Christ Jesus, are looking for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

* In making these remarks I am greatly indebted to Hitchcock's work on " Religion and Geology ;" to Hugh Miller's able work, " Footprints of the Creator ;" to Dr. King's interesting " Manual ;" Dr. Anderson's " Courses of Creation ;" and to a valuable work on the " Earth's Antiquity," by the Rev. J. Gray, rector of Dibden.

CHAPTER III.

CREATION.

“ My heart is awed within me, when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on
In silence round me—the perpetual work
Of thy creation finished, yet renewed
For ever.”

“ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”—GEN. i. 1.

THE Bible begins its marvellous record with Genesis, or the account of the creation of all, and it closes it with Revelation, or the re-genesis, that is, the announcement of the regeneration of all things. It begins with God, and it ends with God. All came from him, and to him is given in the Bible the glory of all.

The first verse of Genesis assumes the existence of God. This is a fact which the sacred penmen rarely attempt to prove. They assume it as almost a self-evident truth, an original and inherent part of the furniture of the human mind—an intuition more than an inference. A voice ever rises from within, and mingles with ten thousand without, declaring there is a

God. His existence and rule are assumed as the basis of all—the great secret and solution of all. Exclude Deity from the universe in our reasonings, and calculations, and thoughts, and hopes, and trusts, and fears, and joys, and nature falls back to chaos, the human heart into despair, and all things become confusion worse confounded.

Nature reverberates in all her chambers, in her heights and depths, in all she was, in all she is, and still more from what she will be—God. We may rise from nature to the apprehension of nature's God; but, however pleasing, this is only a discovery. The Bible tells us that God is, and this is a revelation. A discovery, we have seen, is something that man makes, and for which he is prone to take a tithe of glory and honour to himself, and which is therefore ever dangerous. But a revelation is something that God gives, in which man knows that he has no share, and from which he can extort no glory. Creation is full of Deity, and revelation resonant with his accents. The natural philosopher rises from what he finds in creation, until he reaches the staple fixed to the throne of God, from which the whole chain of being hangs. A Christian starts with

God, who is announced to him in his Bible, and comes down to see what creation is, from what he has found God to be. Hence, the mere natural philosopher argues what God is, from the jarring and broken state in which he finds creation; but a Christian argues what creation is, was, and will be, from what he has first discovered God in his word to be. In this lies the superiority of the Christian's deductions, that he forms his conceptions of creation from a previous knowledge of God, and can explain it all; whereas the natural man forms his conceptions of God from a very much marred, a broken, and a disjointed world, and therefore often errs. Hence, the mere theist's apprehension of God is not a perfect one, because his evidence is not so; the Christian's idea of the world is the only true one, because his idea of God is an inspired one.

What a blessed thought is this, if we could all at all times realize it, that we, and all about us, are the creatures of God! When we have no sense of our adoption by grace, we may fall back upon the fact of our creation by power. If I cannot say, owing to the faltering of my faith, "O Lord, I am thy adopted son," I may

yet say, because it is impossible to avoid it, "O Lord, I am thy creature." There is a collect in the English Prayer Book, "O Lord, who hatest nothing that thou hast made." I think that is very beautiful: God hates nothing that he has made; and whatever God hates is, come whence it may, an interpolation, an intrusion, which vitiates all it touches, and will be destroyed, but which he did not make.

If God made us all, this brings before us the dead level on which all humanity is laid. We all occupy one common level, as the workmanship of one hand—the offspring of one Parent. Our birth and our decay, our origin and our end, our immortality and our tears, our sorrows and our joys, should all lead us to sympathize with each other, but never to hate and persecute each other.

When we read the first chapter of Genesis, and think of the vastness of created things therein recorded, we may form, and God warrants us to do so, not as a substitute for our creed, but as an illustration of it, some idea of the greatness of Him who made all. When God created the world is of very little consequence; that he created the world is the precious and

practical fact for us. When I think of the mountain ranges so vast in height, of primæval forests so extensive, of the ocean lifting up its unsleeping eye; of the sun and moon and stars ever looking down, and recollect that there are stars so distant, that, though light travels from the sun to the earth in four minutes, yet the light of these stars, travelling with almost inconceivable rapidity, has not yet reached our orb; when I think that stars the most distant are really centres of systems, and those systems each with its central sun only groups around another central sun, and that central sun with these groups, which are clusters of worlds, only a small group around a yet inner central sun; and that all these, and more than these that the telescope brings before us, are but a few of the out-posts of that starry host which keeps watch on the infinite plains, or ministers about God's throne perpetually; in short, that all that the best telescope is able to bring within the horizon are but some of the scattered sentinels of those magnificent battalions that cover the fields of immensity;—we may try to conceive, but adequately conceive we cannot, the magnificence and the greatness of Him who made all, and sits

enthroned upon the riches of all, from whom all came, and to whom all give glory and honour and praise. But I have spoken of catching a glimpse of what God is by the great things that the telescope brings within the horizon from the stupendous heights of nature; but I dare venture to state, that we have even a grander idea of what God is by the little things that the microscope brings within our view from the depths of the earth we live on. The more that one discovers of the universe about us, the more one is perplexed to determine whether God is seen to be most great in creating fixed stars, in controlling high angels, or in forming those minute and microscopic organisms which the human eye cannot see, but every one of which millions upon millions, invisible and intangible by us, has a perfect organization of nerves and veins and arteries. Man's mind is overwhelmed by the magnificent things which the telescope brings down to him; it is no less struck by the minute things which the microscope brings up to him; one feels what difficulty there must be in being an atheist, what credulity there must be in that man who can muster moral depravity to expose his intellectual blindness, and to cry,

“There is no God.” I think there is nothing so plain, so palpable, so unmistakeable on earth, apart from the Bible, as that there is a God.

We have spoken of the outer creation as a mirror of Deity, but when we come to what is more familiar to us, ourselves, what evidence is there in all our structure of God! We have heard that not a few physicians and medical men are sceptically inclined. I wonder at it. Of course the human body cannot teach us that Christ died for sinners; for this precious truth we must go to God's revealed word; but the human body does teach every man that it is not an accidental thing struck off from some other, but an original creation of Deity, instinct with beautiful design, and eloquent with instructive lessons. So delicate is this body of ours, that one feels at times it is better not to know it too well, for the more we understand it, the more we shall wonder that it holds together for ten minutes; and yet it is so powerful, that what it can endure, and what it will do, and what it will dare, defies almost the historian to record. Yet, noble as this body is, after all it is not the man; it is but the moveable tent which he carries about with him. It is a combination of levers, and pulleys, and

hooks, and pumps, and wheels, and windows, and speaking trumpets, and acoustic tubes, to enable the man within, who is its owner, to communicate with this outer world. But if this body be so exquisitely made, so wondrously arranged, it must be a very grand inhabitant for which such machinery, so complicated, so beautiful, so delicate, and yet so strong, has been prepared. If the body give traces and evidence of wisdom, design, omnipotence, how much more that soul which dwells in its innermost chambers, for which that body was made and consecrated of old! How precious the jewel for which so exquisite a casket was got ready! how great the inner king for whom so royal a palace was built! and how truly do both show alike the wisdom and the power of Him who made them, and knit them inseparably together. I know nothing greater than man's soul, but God; and I know no creature in heaven, upon earth, that he would not degrade himself by giving religious worship to. He never appears more ennobled than when he bows the knee and gives undivided adoration to God. What man's soul has done is evidence of its greatness, but the fact that that soul, so great, could not reinstate itself in the

relationship to God which it had lost, is evidence what a terrible chasm sin must have introduced into the world.

We have thus glanced at these thoughts, familiar to most minds, as illustrative of the greatness of Him who made the heaven and the earth, and all things visible and invisible. Enough remains in all God's works to indicate benevolence, and to show that he is not only an almighty Creator, but a benevolent Creator. We know there are jarring elements thrust up at intervals that seem to prove the opposite, but they are to be accounted for by revelation light, and only in that light. But take the world as we find it, and we discover in the whole, notwithstanding the ravages of a new and hostile element, wonderful traces of benevolence. There is proof that no physiologist has discovered in the human body a single nerve that was designed to create pain; he has not found a single vessel that was meant to vitiate the blood, or one gland originally meant to secrete poison; the whole organization of man indicates original benevolence, in one word, that his benefit and happiness only was the primal end of the first creation of man. So, when we look on God's outer world, he might,

for instance, have made one vast monotonous scene, perfectly sufficient to grow food and to furnish drink for man. But as we are refreshed by change, and cannot bear long-protracted monotony, God has introduced infinite variety. The same sight always seen, the same tone always heard, however beautiful, become tiresome in the end. We are made for the enjoyment of variety. Well, God has condescended in creation to minister to this. What splendid variety in the starry sky! what rich glories in a landscape! what variegated colours in all things about, above, around, and beneath us! and all not necessary to man, yet all emanating from infinite benevolence, and meant to be happiness to us. What is no less striking a proof of creative goodness and love, the best portions of God's created world no nobleman or prince can put into his title-deeds, or claim as his monopoly. For instance, when we go out into the country, we can say truly, these acres belong to that nobleman, those fields to that landlord; but that which is the choicest of both, the beautiful landscape, belongs to all; I can enjoy it just as much as the proprietor of it all; and I can see from my humble door the splendour of

a starry sky, and be refreshed by the scene as intensely as the greatest king or emperor in the whole earth. How interesting to us, that, while God has given to the rich man stones, earth, water,—the rough, hard, elementary materials,—he has reserved the cream of his creation, its loveliest, its most beautiful parts, the virgin blush of morn and the matron dignity of even, for the beggar by the way-side as much as for the peer, the prince, or the nobleman. We see in all this rich and deep traces and evidences of God's benevolence.

We may fairly argue, after these reflections, that, if God made all, He governs all. If we suppose that God made all, as we are sure, we may very logically infer that God governs all. It is impossible to suppose that so complicated an economy as the material world, and the organized and living beings that are on it, would go on unless He who originally made them maintains them. We know that by a law, which every philosopher knows, impulses die, forces exhaust themselves. So in the absence of a governing hand and impulsive presence, it seems to me creation would stand still, fountains would cease to gush forth, rivers to flow, orbs

would diverge from their relationship, and all creation would soon resolve itself into chaos again. It is the fool looking at creation, who says, "No God." It is as great a fool, who looks at the carrying on of creation and sees no God. Creation's origin cries, "There is a God:" its continuance cries, "There is a God:" the Bible says, "for by him all things were made, and by him all things consist."

Atheism is the most illogical and unnatural thing. It seems to me a vacuum, a freezing vacuum, in which no wing can soar, no human being can breathe; where "all life dies, and death lives, and nature breeds perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things." And surely, if it be an illogical creed, it is not a delightful one. To have no paternal heart to feel for this great family of ours, to have no open eye to pity us, no guiding hand to keep us; to feel that, when we lie down on the last pillow, on which we must all lie down, and when the nearest and dearest must leave us, unable to accompany us any further, there is no one beyond to take us up,—it is intolerable, it is dreadful, it revolts the deepest instincts of the human heart, it contradicts the word of God.

Having noticed these simple lessons, I venture again to allude to a science that has excited very great attention, of which I am not a profound student, but of the main details of which I know something; I mean, what has been supposed to be the dissonance between geological science, and the Mosaic account in Genesis of the creation of the world. It has been alleged by some scientific men that there is a discord between what Moses writes, as he alleged, by the inspiration of God, in Genesis, and what they discover, as they truly assert, in the archives of the globe itself.

I recur to this subject to notice, very briefly, that the Bible was not written to teach us science: this was not its object; and to try to construct a scientific system from the pages of the Bible, is to try to extort from it what it was never meant to supply. It was written in human speech, and in popular phraseology, to convey to our souls precious and saving truths. We ourselves know, that if we were to hear a thorough scientific scholar, being a minister of the gospel, preaching, never in popular phraseology, but in strictly scientific terms, we could not long listen to him; be-

cause much that he said would seem to us incongruous, much would be unintelligible, and more would fail in conveying those precious truths that we come to church to hear. The Bible was not given us as a book out of which systems of science might be drawn. The chemist may inquire how such and such crystallization took place, the astronomer may investigate how the sun and moon and earth are related, and the geologist may try to determine how old the earth is; but the Bible returns to the chemist, the astronomer, and the geologist, the answer which its Author returned to one of old, who asked the too curious question, "Are there many that be saved?" "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." It tells them, these questions you may ask of creation, and try to extort an answer by your optic tube, or your crucible; and by all means try to master and to acquire every information that creation can furnish; but when you appeal to the Bible, you come, not as geologists, nor as astronomers, nor as chemists, but as sinners asking a question infinitely more important, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" That is the question that the Bible answers in varied forms;

and anxiously putting the same question, still we must search it for a suitable answer.

But, while this is perfectly true, there are in the Bible incidental allusions, occasional passing declarations, which fairly, and without forcing them, touch the domain of science. We admit, in stating Divine things, and in illustrating spiritual truths, there are figures drawn from the outer world, and incidental references to great physical, providential, or natural phenomena, scattered throughout the pages of the Bible. If one could discover that these incidental allusions, however incidental, not in main but subordinate things, do really contradict the positive and well-ascertained conclusions of science,—if one should find that a distinct statement in Genesis positively contradicts a distinct discovery made by a patient inquisitor into the archives of nature,—then our course would be very plain. We know not that the mere scientific man would be able to take the same course. Mine would be this,—I have satisfied myself on independent evidence, most clear, and conclusive, to my mind irresistible, that this book is from God. Having done this, I lay aside this fact on a shelf by itself in my mind, there to remain

immoveable, not to be touched by any thing, because, on evidence the most satisfactory, I have proved this Bible to be Divine. If you discover in your book—the book of the earth, or the book of the sky—any thing which contradicts it, I am quite sure that there must be some flaw in your calculation; for my book has been proved by incontestable evidence to be Divine, and therefore you must be in error; your conclusion cannot be just. Wait longer, and search deeper. Such would be my reply. It would not satisfy the mere scientific man; although, I might add, I have some precedent for it: for you scientific men have come forward to prove that the Mosaic account was untrue, before now; and only after you went back to your studies, and inquired a little more profoundly, did you admit you were wrong. Very well, if some of your former discoveries have by yourselves been admitted to have been wrong, some of your present alleged discoveries, which you marshal against revelation, may, on more mature investigation, be found to be wrong too; and therefore I am not unwise in holding this Bible as Divine, and waiting patiently until you become a little riper in your studies; and believing that then you will

certainly find that the Bible remains, with its credentials untouched, the inspiration and the revelation of God. Nevertheless, while this satisfies me, it will not altogether satisfy the scientific inquirer. He stumbles, hesitates; hence the sceptic will seize the discoveries of science and fling them in the face of Christianity; and they who are too willing to get something to say against the Bible, because it prophesies evil about them,—they who are too anxious to get their intellects to bear out what their passions need, in order to cover their indulgences,—will be very thankful to catch something to throw against the Bible; and men of science, who are full of scientific investigation, and enamoured of scientific discovery, will hesitate before they accept a book which, they think, contradicts the plainest and the most unequivocal disclosures which they have made in the bowels of the earth, or among the stars of the sky. To all these we answer, as we have already indicated, there is not the least dissonance between God's written book and the most mature discoveries of modern geological science. One thing, however, there may be; there may be a contradiction between the discoveries of geology and our pre-

conceived interpretations of the Bible. But this is not because the Bible is wrong, but because our interpretation of it was wrong.

“ And the earth was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” Now here is the past condition of the globe, prior to its present configuration, collocation, and arrangement. After this, the present configuration of the globe began, about six thousand years ago. “ The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light.”

In order to demonstrate that this view is not a novel nor yet a peculiar one of my own, I will just give you one or two extracts from a very remarkable book, indicating great scientific requirements united to deep religious feeling. It is written by Dr. Hitchcock, President of Amherst College, and Professor of Natural Theology and Geology, and is called “ The Religion of Geology and its connected Sciences.” He gives the opinions of a number of eminent men, who hold this view. “ ‘ The interval,’ says Bishop Horsley, ‘ between the production of the matter of chaos and the formation of light, is undescribed and unknown.’ ‘ By the phrase,

‘in the beginning,’” says Doederlin, ‘the time is declared when something began to be. But when God produced this remarkable work, Moses does not precisely define.’ ‘We do not know,’ says Sharon Turner, ‘and we have no means of knowing, at what point of the ever-flowing eternity, of that which is alone eternal.—the Divine subsistence,—the creation of our earth, or any part of the universe, began.’ ‘All that we can learn explicitly from revelation is, that nearly six thousand years have passed since our first parents began to be.’ ‘The detailed history of creation in the first chapter of Genesis,’ says Dr. Chalmers, ‘begins at the middle of the second verse; and what precedes might be understood as an introductory sentence, by which we are most appositely told, both that God created all things at the first, and that afterwards—by what interval of time it is not specified—the earth lapsed into chaos, from the darkness and disorder of which the present system or economy of things was made to arise. Between the initial act and the details of Genesis, the world, for aught we know, might have been the theatre of many revolutions, the traces of which geology may still investigate.’” Here is

a very decided testimony. Dr. Pye Smith, too, the recent president of Homerton College, says, "A philological survey of the initial sections of the Bible (Gen. i. 1 to ii. 3) brings out the result: 1. That the first sentence is a simple, independent, all-comprehending axiom, to this effect—that *matter*, elementary or combined, aggregated only or organized, and *dependent, sentient, and intellectual beings*, have not existed from eternity, either in self-continuity or succession, but had a beginning; that their beginning took place by the all-powerful will of one Being, the self-existent, independent, and infinite in all perfection; and that the date of that beginning is not known. 2. That at a recent epoch our planet was brought into a state of disorganization, detritus, or ruin, (perhaps we have no perfectly appropriate term,) from a former condition. 3. That it pleased the almighty, wise, and benevolent Supreme, out of that state of ruin to adjust the surface of the earth to its now existing condition, the whole extending through the period of six natural days." Dr. Harris also says, "My firm persuasion is, that the first verse of Genesis was designed by the Divine Spirit to announce the

absolute organization of the material universe by the Almighty Creator; and that it is so understood in the other parts of holy writ; that, passing by an indefinite interval, the second verse describes the state of our planet immediately prior to the Adamic creation, and that the third verse begins the account of the six days' work." Dr. King, of Glasgow, Dr. Schmucker, of the Lutheran Church, and Dr. Pond, of the American Church, are also quoted in this very book, to show that this is not a singular opinion, but one held by the best divines, who have had the materials enabling them to come to a conclusion.

The disclosures of geology justify the announcement of revelation, that all material things had a beginning. Now, this is a very remarkable fact, that geology proves that the eternity of matter, which infidels try to establish, is a falsehood and a fable. In other words, when we argued with the infidel, and said, There are in the earth, in the human body, in flowers, and trees, and all things, evidences of design, and that design benevolent design; and therefore there must be a benevolent designer; the reply of the sceptic invariably was, that this was always the case; and unless you can show that

this long chain of designs had a beginning, you do not prove that there is a God who made the world; because it has continued since we knew, and it must always continue, and we infer that it must always have been. Now, geology settles this; it proves to demonstration that races have become extinct, and that new acts of creation have been interposed. I think it is one of the most striking and wonderful discoveries of this science, that the Creator has more than twice, thrice, four, or perhaps ten times, stepped in and created by distinct acts successive races or dynasties of animate things. In other words, geology proves how true is the announcement of Revelation, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Dr. Chalmers has wielded this argument with very great force in his *Evidences of Natural Religion*, which are well worth perusing.

And this science proves, too, that God is distinct from creation, and not what the Pantheists suppose him to be, part and parcel of creation.

All science, therefore, as it becomes brighter, is casting fresh light upon the Scriptures, and proving, if the Christian needs any additional proof, that "holy men of old wrote as they were

moved by the Holy Ghost.” If we take the Koran of Mahomet, we shall read statements in it inconsistent with the simplest elements of science. If we open the Vedas of the East, we shall find that they contain the most absurd and irrational description of the physical world. But in the Bible there never yet has been found a single statement that contradicts the discoveries of science. On the contrary, science rather keeps advancing and coming up to the simple statements of the word of God. And in all this we have a proof, if the Christian needs it, that “holy men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Now, this God who in the beginning made the heaven and the earth, is our Father. We learn this, not from the archives of the earth, in which the geologist traces his foot-prints, and fetches up the proofs and monuments of his creative power, but in that precious book which tells us that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Whether, therefore, we see God’s foot-prints in the depths where the geologist unfolds them, or trace God’s presence in the heights where the astronomer soars, or whether He sweeps past, and we catch a glimpse

of His glory as he passes by, in all heights—in all depths—everywhere, it is God; but the Christian can add, It is our Father. No section of the earth discloses to the Christian a hostile being, but every part of it discovers to him his Father. And he can look at sun, and moon, and stars, and fruit, and flower, and tree, and say what none but a Christian can say, “My Father made them all.”

In the next place, seeing God in every creature, and seeing that God governs every movement, the Christian must feel that nothing can scathe him unseen or unpermitted by God. What a precious thought is this—there are no such things in this world as accidents! We know well that if the pin were to fly out of the axle of a wheel, it might be the destruction of many persons; and so if there were such a thing as an accident thrust into God’s creation, it might be the disorganization of all. There are no such things as accidents, but all are permitted, or controlled, and directed by God. A Christian knows, when he looks abroad on creation, that nothing is hostile to him. That avalanche, that earthquake, that poison, cannot scathe me; all are God’s creatures, and they

must work for good to me ; and if it is his will to make use of any one of them to remove me, it is only to liberate me from the house in which I have tabernacled, in order to introduce me to a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Another lesson we may learn from this. The fact that God made all should be to us an inducement to make a sanctified use of all. God says, when you sit down to eat the blessings he has provided, all that are on that table are my creatures ; I made all. That bread you eat, that water you drink, the wine you taste, are God's creatures ; they bear the superscription and the stamp of their Maker ; and they should be used therefore to God's glory. Henceforth, in the language of the sacred penman, " whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

In the next place, may we not gather from creation a type of regeneration. Some Christians believe in instant conversions ; I doubt them. What is called an instant conversion is very often the result of innumerable previous thoughts, influences, sympathies, all brought to converge into one focus ; and then that which is the

result of innumerable previous and long-acting elements is mistaken, and supposed by him who is its subject to be instantaneous. In creation, God took six days to arrange the present surface of this planet. He might have done it by his fiat, but he was pleased to create it by a process; and I think this analogy would lead us to infer that he is pleased to regenerate by a process.

If God made so beautiful a world out of a chaos, if the fairest flowers of the field all came originally out of the chaotic elements "without form and void," may we not infer at least the possibility of what Scripture declares to be a prophecy, the resurrection of the dead; and that the least atom of our dust God's omniscience sees, and God's omnipotence will collect and reconstitute again in living and immortal bodies.

But there is a lesson that this chapter does not teach—that we are not what God made us. That is plain enough. God once made us in his own image, and he pronounced us to be good: who does not feel, for our own hearts condemn us, that His image is defaced, and the glory is lost; that we once were friends, but we are many of us foes; once in communion with Him, now

many of us strangers. All that is wrong in man, we are responsible for. The Bible never says that God made sin, and he is not responsible for it. Wherever it came from, I cannot tell, only God did not make it. But this we are sure of, everything that remains good in the universe has God for its Author; while all that is wicked, or that is sinful, is from the creature, and from the creature alone. Yet, blessed be God! though we made ourselves evil, he has not left us to our own devices; he has bowed the heavens, and come into our world, and died for us upon the cross, and made an atonement for our sins; and through His precious blood we may be restored to our lost relationship, reinstated in a greater dignity, once more be the sons of God, and the world close with a grander Paradise and a nobler being to cultivate it, than that with which creation first began.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST MAN, ADAM, AND THE LAST.

“Thou man thy image mad'st, in dignity,
In knowledge, and in beauty like to Thee;
Placed in a heaven on earth; without his toil,
The ever-flourishing and fruitful soil
Unpurchased food produced; all creatures were
His subjects, serving more for love than fear.”

“Who” (Adam) “is the figure of him that was to come.”—ROM. v. 14.

CREATION bears still over all its aspects the evidences, not only of creative power, but of beneficence and goodness. God might have made the orb we inhabit a prison; he might have furnished us with all that is essential to subsistence, and left us to grope our way upon its surface, and to endure life rather than to live, if such a life could be called living at all. But, instead of this, he has made it as beautiful as the hand of skill and as the heart of beneficence could devise. He has studded its cieling with stars, as with a thousand lamps; he has beautified its floor with the variegated flowers of the field, and made creation a ministry of beauty, so rich, that the ceaseless action of six

thousand years has not been able to destroy it, and the sin of succeeding generations has not utterly swept it away.

But after God had made the earth, and formed all its living tenantry, it seems one was wanting to be the capital and the crown, the ruler and priest of all. The birds were in the air, those choristers of the earth, whose song is the anthem of the sky, the fishes in the streams, the cattle upon a thousand hills ; but all still waited for him who is pronounced by St. Paul to have been “the figure of him that was to come.” Without intelligence inhabiting the earth, without an eye to read it, or an ear to hear it, it would have been after all a very uninteresting orb, but when man was placed upon it in his meridian wisdom, strength, and health, then it was perfect ; it was pronounced by its Maker to be “very good.” Man was the eye of creation to see the hand that governs it, the ear of creation to hear the bidding of Him who made it, the heart of creation to love God, the priest, in short, of creation to offer up its many-voiced psalm of praise, and to lift up its incense perpetually, and minister a holy Levite in creation, and before creation’s God, giving unto him that

made it all the glory, and the honour, and the praise. Man, therefore, was the last and the noblest of creation's birth-week; his appearance crowned it. His body was made of the dust, but it was the efflorescence of the dust; just as the diamond is made of charcoal, but is yet the diamond. His soul was made in the likeness of Deity, immortal as God is, and holy as God is, and happy as God is. He had in that garden the tree of life to shade him, the music of a thousand streams to delight him, the very branches of the trees were harp-strings that hymned God's praise, and it required his voice only to mingle in the universal harmony to render homage to Him who governs all, and would preserve all.

After man's creation, on which we need not dwell, we have a sentiment enunciated by Him who knew him, it was not good that man should be alone; and therefore he made one to be a helpmate, that is, meet, or appropriate, for him. Does not this teach us that the social state is man's natural state? that the monastic, the ascetic, the insulated life is man's unnatural state? This is evinced by fact. In solitude man degenerates; in society, as part of a mighty whole,

he advances and develops his powers, his faculties, and his endowments, in the highest possible degree. In other words, man was not made to be a solitary, but a social being. The special evidence of this was God's institution of marriage; it has its divine foundation and origin in Deity; God himself was the first celebrant of it, and it is the institution that still survives the fall. It was re-constituted or re-baptized by Christ when he quoted the very words of this chapter, indicating in the one voice the inspiration of Moses, and demonstrating in the other the propriety of that ordinance, the history and original of which is here recorded. We thus learn that marriage is not a mere civil contract. Of course it is a civil contract, so far as that the law of the land must be the basis of it for all legal purposes; but it is really and truly more than this; it is a Divine institution. It is legal marriage to be married at the registrar's office, but it is not Christian marriage. It does seem to me that it is not a mere civil union to be recognised by law, which of course it must be, but that it is as well a sacred, a spiritual, and a religious ordinance, never to be celebrated without religious rites,

religious sanction, and under the influence of religious principles. Destroy Christianity, and how long do you think will marriage last? Take away religion, and it become a mere joint-stock agreement, which may last for years, for months, or for weeks, according to the taste and the temperament of the parties. But admit the high and holy sanction of religion, and then it is not, what Romanism calls it, a sacrament; but it is, as Protestants regard it, a solemn, a holy, and a lasting union, to be dissolved only by death, and the shadow and the type of a greater one, to which the apostle alludes in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

We gather from this ordinance in connexion with man, that polygamy never was God's design, nor was it meant for man. It was not God's purpose; for Adam was created, and Eve was brought to him, and it is said that a man shall "leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife (not wives); and they shall be one flesh." And, as if nature itself would testify against the infraction of the Divine ordinance, wherever polygamy exists, as in Mahometan countries, there the human race rapidly degenerates; and only where the

Christian sanctions, and scriptural law, and Divine principles are developed and carried into practice, it is seen that society reaches to its culminating grandeur, and man, instead of retrograding down to the brutes that perish, approximates to God in moral, in intellectual, and even in physical state; and humanity ceases to be a drove, and becomes a nation. I might give the very simple illustration of the truth, that polygamy is not designed, in the very simple fact that the sexes are very nearly equal in number. There is a slight preponderance of the female sex; but the proportion of male to female is, what it has ever been, very nearly equal.

It is the religious sanction that gives the wife her proper dignity, her true place and relationship. In some countries the wife is regarded merely as an elegant and sensuous toy. In other nations she is made a domestic servant. In Hindoo states she is degraded to the lowest possible level to which so beautiful a fragment of humanity can be driven. Only in Christian, primarily in Protestant, countries—I say, primarily and chiefly in Protestant countries, does she become the companion, the con-

fidant, the friend, the equal of man. Beautifully, though rather quaintly, is it remarked by Henry, but not less truly, that she was not taken from man's head, to govern him, nor from man's foot, to be trampled on by him, but from man's side, to indicate companionship, co-equality, and mutual friendship. That she is of the same original rank and dignity as man, is plain from her very name. She was called Isha. The Hebrew for a man is Ish; for a woman it is Isha; just as we say, "lion," "lioness." Here it is "man," and "manness," which words would be the literal translation of the Hebrew. Here it is shown that she has the same rank, and the same gifts, and the same powers in her own sphere that man has. Woman only loses power when she steps from the sphere that she adorns into one that she was not meant for; just as man loses his finest tone and temperament when he degrades her from the position that she should occupy, and sinks her into one for which she was never meant. We shall find that it is by each keeping to his own place, that each will excel. There is a sphere where woman is sure to fail, and the reaction will be her own degradation; and there is a sphere where man is

sure not to excel, and the result will be only his own ruin. It is by each holding his own place, invested with the original attributes, and fulfilling the duties that God has assigned, that each receives a true lustre, and both are felt useful one to the other.

This union, which is here indicated, is to death. There is no law in the Scriptures indicating any sanction of separation, unless for the violation of the very essence of the holy compact. What God has joined let no man put asunder. And, except on the strength of this testimony, I cannot see any ground for the perpetuity of the marriage compact.

The next remarkable fact in connexion with the history of man, is the institution of the Christian sabbath. I state these things as preparatory to a parallel which is based upon these facts. God, it is said, rested on the seventh day. This does not mean, of course, and few would suppose it, that God was weary and took rest. The simple meaning is, that God rested from creation-work on the sabbath day. This is plain from our Lord's own words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," teaching that on the sabbath day God carries on his work of providence just as much

as on the other days of the week. And therefore all that is declared is, that he ceased from one kind of work. The new dynasty was introduced, and God therefore ceased from creation work. But providential work he still carries on. For instance, the sap rising from the roots of plants and trees to the stem, the earth marching in its orbit, the sun and the moon and the stars pursuing their courses, go on by the immediate power of God put forth upon the seventh day, just as it is put forth on the rest of the days of the week. And therefore, we are now to understand by our resting on the sabbath, not simply the staying of the water-wheel, the hushing of the whistle of the railway engine, and the shutting up of the shop windows, and yet more of the same kind that is right and proper, but also that the day is to be spent in active labours, namely, in enlightening our minds, in ministering to each other's comfort, and to each other's spiritual, intellectual, and moral good, and in doing every thing within our reach to make society around us more holy and happy. The sabbath plainly is not a mere Jewish institution. The evidence lies in this, Adam was not a Jew, perhaps I might say he was not a Gentile; he

was neither; and the sabbath was instituted for the use of Adam as the father of the human race, not as the first link in the ancient Jewish or Levitical economy. Hence, the original institution of the sabbath is evidence that it is not a Jewish institution, merely for the Jews, and to pass away with their economy, but that it is for all mankind, and the right of all that will; so that each man has just as great a right to have his sabbath as he has to keep his Bible. It is true toleration to prevent any body keeping the Bible from you, and it is true toleration to prevent any body keeping the sabbath from you. It is your right; God has given it to you as his own precious gift; use it, sanctify it, devote it to the holiest of purposes, and allow all men within your reach the enjoyment that you yourselves have.

The sabbath thus instituted was a patriarchal observance before the giving of the law. The ceasing of the manna on the seventh day, which was also before the law, is evidence that the sabbath was then observed. The fourth commandment says, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," which shows that instead of its being the institution of it, it was only a refer-

ence to its prior institution. It says, "Remember the sabbath day," a day that they knew, only to be recollected, not to be instituted in order to be observed.

It is said, God blessed that day. He blessed it just in the same manner as our Saviour blessed the bread at the communion table. Just as he set apart that bread, instead of being a common meal, to be a sacramental thing; so God set apart this day from being a day for common work, to be a day for sequestered purposes, and for holy work.

If the sabbath were needful for man in Paradise, how much more needful is it for man now! If then he needed some day to remind him more vividly of what he owed to God, how much more do we need it now! Let us, therefore, value the sabbath; let us defend the sabbath from all aggression that would taint, pollute, or destroy it. When a nation loses its sabbaths, it loses the firmest pillars of its stability, its grandeur, and its power. The real secrets of a nation's strength are not what we hear, nor what we see: these are its religion, its sabbaths, its Bibles. These are like the piers sunk in the flood below the tide mark, invisible to us, but upon them rests

the whole superstructure of social greatness and national strength.

It has, however, been objected, that we had no right to change the sabbath from the seventh, on which day it was originally instituted, to the first. I answer, there are two parts in the sabbath; there is the ceremonial part, which is the day on which it is observed; there is the moral part, which is the seventh portion of our time: it is not the seventh day, but it is the seventh portion of our time consecrated to sabbath work, and to sabbath objects. Now the ceremonial of the Jewish religion is altered, and the ceremonial of the Christian religion alters according to circumstances, but the moral and spiritual remain. So the mere ceremonial of the sabbath varies with varying circumstances, but the moral remains. For instance, at the Antipodes it is now Saturday with them, whereas it is sabbath with us; and if you go half way to the Antipodes, they have half of our sabbath and a portion of our Saturday. It follows, then, that the exact day cannot be observed over the whole earth, for it is sabbath with us and Saturday at the Antipodes; and thus it varies over the whole surface of the globe. In this fact we have evidence that

the ceremonial is adapted to circumstances, but the moral or ever-recurring seventh day, constituted and observed as the sabbath, is of absolute obligation. Besides, we read that the reason of the change was, that he who proclaimed himself Lord of the sabbath,—he, mind you, not who was called so, but who proclaimed himself Lord of the sabbath,—assigned the first day of the week to be the Christian sabbath. And every seventh day still recurring is now the sabbath, only it is the first, in order to remind us not only of creation, but to lead us to anticipate the world that shall be restored to the righteousness and love of Christ Jesus.

We have thus seen the leading incidents in another chapter of Genesis. It is now said that Adam, thus surrounded, thus invested, was a type, or a figure, for the word is the same, of him that was to come, that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to show that this is not a solitary assertion, I refer to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul tells us also in the 45th verse of the 15th chapter, “The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” Then, the 47th verse says, “The first man is of the earth,

earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." Throughout the Epistle to the Romans, he argues on the hypothesis that the first Adam was the type of the second. Let us see then if there is any parallelism, or if the first be illustrative of the second.

The first Adam was formed of the dust of the earth, breathed into immediately by God, without a father and without a mother. In so far, he seems to have been typical of the second; for our Lord, as relates to his humanity, had no father; as relates to his Deity, had no mother. And therefore, contrary to the sentiments of the Roman Church, we assert that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, and Mary was not the mother of God.

In the next place, Adam was, when first created, a new manifestation of God. The rest of the animals that preceded the creation of Adam were created out of the dust, and had mere animal life, but no more. But Adam constituted a new manifestation; he was a link between matter as embodied in the animal creation, and spirit as existent in the angels that are around the throne. He combined in himself the ethereal and the material, and was so far a mani-

festation of God. We are told that what was true in the type is more gloriously so in the Antitype: for Jesus, as we are told by the apostle, is "God manifest in the flesh," is the perfect man. Looking to him, we can see the idea that was wrecked in Adam, restored in Christ, and acquainted with him you can catch a glimpse of the glory of God as he sweeps by; thus we see in Jesus the model of the perfect man, the manifestation of the gracious God, and now the most glorious manifestation in the history of God's dealings with mankind.

Again, Adam, as soon as he was made, was constituted the lord of creation; he was the governor of all; he gave names to all; and these names were indicative of his lordship. Who can fail to see traces of that lordship still? Even the powerful lion, unless very ravenous with hunger, will shrink back from man; and it is said, that they who have the nerve and the physical firmness, when assailed by wild beasts, may by a fixed and piercing eye make them flinch back. The brute creation seems to catch in man's face a fugitive shadow of ancient dominion, that makes them wince from his presence. That lordship may degenerate into tyranny, which

sin has made it, but there is enough of it left to show that it was once, and there is enough of its perversion to show how sin has driven it out of course. But man's original position was to be lord of all creation, and if he had not let go his peace, when he let go his allegiance to God, it would be so still. Man rose in mutiny against God, and all nature instantly rose in mutiny against man. But as Adam was the lord of creation, and meant to be so, we read that our blessed Redeemer is Lord of creation by right, and shall be Lord of creation in fact. We read in the 8th Psalm, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all

things under his feet"—here was the first constitution: "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Now we find the apostle Paul quoting this very Psalm in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and stating, (ii. 6—9,) "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." In other words, the apostle indicates that Christ sits upon his throne, till all his enemies shall be made his footstool; that he is by right and by original investiture Lord of all. The day comes

when what is right shall be fact; and he who has justly, and by title, the right of all, shall be in history throned Lord of all.

We afterwards read, Adam felt it not good, as I have explained, to be alone, and God made “an help meet for him.” How interesting is the fact, that Jesus, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim, in glory which we cannot conceive, and eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, needing nothing to add to his happiness, capable of nothing that could detract from that happiness — how mysterious, how remarkable, yet, like Adam, if I might use an expression capable of misconstruction, felt alone, and selected a people out of every kindred and tongue to be his “bride” — “the Lamb’s wife” — I use the language of Scripture, that he might present her to himself “a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But why did Christ thus interfere? There is no answer except in his own love. Why pass by the angels that fell — the loftier nature — and lay hold of us? I cannot answer. Why interpose to rescue those who had ruined themselves? I cannot reply, except in these words, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And when we think that that soul which is in each man's body had a beginning, but never can have an end, we can well see that if that grand interposition had not been, ours had been infinite sorrow, and endless suffering; for through that interposition alone our lost inheritance is restored, our forfeited rights returned, and man made capable of the hopes of glory, and of honour, and of immortality.

We read that Eve his wife was taken from Adam's side while he slept. Some of our modern philosophers laugh at this. Very well; give us a better history, give us what you can prove to be true, and we will accept it; but we have heard of no account so simple and so satisfactory as that which is contained in the book of Genesis. You may talk of it as a thing strange, but it may have had its spiritual significance as well as historic truth, and may contain more than we have yet learned. But, at all events, whatever is its significance, it is recorded as fact; and we are satisfied to keep the old facts in our creed, till they are dislodged by others that can be proved to be so, and some-

thing better. Eve was, then, taken from Adam's side, while Adam was thrown into a deep slumber; so that during the operation he slept, and the chasm created in his side was more than compensated by an accession immediately after to the happiness and comfort and joy of his heart. When Jesus hung upon the cross, and his side was pierced, and he was laid in the sleep of death in that solitary tomb in the garden, his church started to her feet, having there her birth-place, entered on her majestic and glorious career, and will not cease until he presents her to himself, "a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing." The idea of the apostle is so perfectly beautiful, and so descriptive of the fact, that I again refer to it. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27.

We learn from the Scriptures, that Adam was a federal and a representative person. In him all humanity was, with him to stand in

its pristine allegiance, or with him to fall. Jesus also has been constituted our federal head. What Adam did, all humanity is guilty of. I do not stop to explain it, I merely quote what is the expression of Scripture—what Adam did, all humanity is guilty of; what Jesus, the second Adam, did, all believers get the advantage of, just as if they had done it. Nature proves in all her economy that we fell in Adam. Revelation shows through all its pages, how we may be restored in Christ. Adam's sin has smitten those who have not personally sinned after his transgression—innocent babes; Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who have not done righteously, but are the chiefest of sinners, that believe in him. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. All that we lost in Adam is more than restored in Christ, by what he has bequeathed to them that believe, to them that are his adopted and regenerated family—an inheritance which Adam never had—a glory to which Adam could have never risen—an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The first Adam fell in

the most favourable position ; the second Adam gloriously triumphed in the most hostile circumstances. Our estate was lost in a garden, it was regained in a desert. The first Adam, with every thing in his favour, lost all ; the second Adam, with every thing against him, more than regained all. Paradise lost is the history of the one ; Paradise regained is the bright epitome of the other.

Creation shall have a sabbath. The Jewish Rabbis all say,—whether they learned it from tradition,—or wherever they got it I know not, that the seven thousandth year of the world will be its great sabbath, or, as it is called in the Epistle to the Hebrews, iv. 9, the *σαββατισμὸς*, the rest that “remaineth to the people of God.” We have reason to believe, then, that the earth is not finally cast off, that the devil will not have it as his possession. It is God’s earth ; it bears still the traces of his handiwork ; his foot-prints are over it ; and though the trail of the serpent has polluted its brightest flowers, and sin, like a fever in its heart, has wrecked and convulsed it from its centre to its circumference, yet it basks in the hopes of a glorious resurrection. Earth shall

put off its long working-day clothes, which it has worn for six days, or six thousand years, and put on its Easter robe, and be more beautiful than it was when it rose under the creative word of God. I believe that where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded; that there is nothing that we lost in Adam that shall not be more than restored in Christ.

But, will there not be those who shall be sentenced to everlasting misery? and that would not have been, you argue, if Adam had not fallen. But why are they sentenced to everlasting misery? Adam did not sin against his will, and no man is cast out of heaven, or from the hopes of heaven, against his will. No man is lost in spite of himself. The devil worked in Adam to will and to do of his evil pleasure; and the Holy Spirit works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. Adam was lost wilfully, wickedly, criminally; sinners now are lost exactly in the same way, because wilfully they reject the great remedy, the salvation provided in the gospel of Christ. Let us then know, that not one here will be in the realms of the lost in consequence of Adam's transgression. We are not denying the inheritance of it, nor are we

denying the imputation of it; yet we believe that not one of us will be among the lost in consequence of what Adam did, but that the condemning sin will be, "that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." This is the condemnation, that ye will not believe in the Son of God, whom he hath sent. Therefore, we expect that when earth shall be restored and replaced in its former orbit, and re-beautified with more than its pristine glory, Satan will not be able to count one wreck, or to lay his finger on one thing, animate or inanimate, and say, "This is suffering, because I succeeded." But every lost creature will have the corroding and the painful recollection, that it alone ruined itself, and passed into misery a suicide, and finds itself in hell because it would not open its eyes, and take the road to heaven.

It has been supposed, we may notice, by many eminent thinkers, that the whole picture of Adam in Paradise is not an historical fact intended to illustrate a spiritual truth, but, on the contrary, that the spiritual truth pre-existed, and that Adam and Eve and Paradise are only the copies;—in other words, that Christ and his church are the

originals, and that Adam and Eve are the mere copies, and that they were appointed as types and symbols of that which was to be.

Now, let us consider this:—We are all the children of Adam. We need not waste time in confessing the justice or the injustice of the fact, that he sinned and that we suffer. Our personal sins aggravate that suffering, and our hearts condemn us, and God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. We feel that we are born in an abnormal state of things. God never made the world as it is, and he never made man as he is. Something has happened, some great catastrophe has smitten us, some dread eclipse has swept over us. We are not now as we originally were. The Bible explains the secret of it. It tells us that by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners. (Rom. v. 19.) It tells us that in Adam all die. (1 Cor. xv. 22.) It tells us there is none righteous, no not one. (Rom. iii. 10.)

And, in the second place, we learn that we cannot retrieve our ruin. That gap must be gigantic that the vast genius of man cannot span. Man can transmit his thoughts upon the lightning's wings; he can span firths of the sea; he

can cross broad and deep rivers ; he can raise monuments of his genius that shall sparkle in the first rays of the rising, and reflect the last beams of the setting, sun. But man cannot cross the distance that separates him from God. Here we are without strength ; here we are emphatically weak. And we need therefore to feel, not only that we are sinners, but that we have not in ourselves the force to alter our relation to God, and to reconstitute ourselves in that relationship which we have justly forfeited.

It is then to man thus helpless that the good news came, "In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Eph. i. 7 ; Col. i. 14.) "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. xv. 22.) "As by one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many"—the vast multitude—"be constituted righteous." (Rom. v. 19.) His righteousness is our title ; his blood is our atonement. And "to him that overcometh," he says, "will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. ii. 7.) In other words, Christ is the way back to heaven, and by and through him we

have re-access to our lost inheritance, a new and lasting title to the true and irreversible rest that remaineth to the people of God.

If, thus, we are all convinced that, whether we like it or not, we are involved in the first Adam's ruin, how blessed to all should the good tidings be that we are welcome, infinitely welcome, to share in the second Adam's restoration! The first we cannot help; it has come upon us without our personal act and responsibility, if I may so speak: but the second we may reject or we may accept. We may say, "We will not have this man to rule over us;" or we may say, "Lord, to whom can we come but unto thee? thou"—the second Adam—"hast the words of eternal life."

May He move our hearts by his Spirit, to embrace his blessed gospel, and thus to save our souls, for Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

THE CURSE.

“ Her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate ;
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
Sighing, through all her works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.”

“ And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field : upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children : and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it ; cursed *is* the ground for thy sake : in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life : thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground : for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve ; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man : and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”—GEN. iii. 14—24.

I HAVE selected the sentence denounced on the human family, and on all associated with Adam, as the subject of the present chapter. The

curse itself that is here executed, was threatened in Genesis ii. 16. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." We have, in Genesis iii. 14—24, the execution of the penalty that had been previously threatened, in all its length and breadth, upon man, and all connected with man.

I stated in a previous chapter, that geologists have discovered the traces, the havoc, and all the evidences of death long prior to the fall of man. I do not think it is possible to resist the proofs, that men of mature, and patient, and Christian minds have adduced, to show that there was such havoc as they describe, it may be thousands, it may be tens of thousands, of years prior to the configuration of the globe in its present state, the creation of Adam, and the work recorded to have taken place during the six days of the first week. To explain this three theories are proposed. These are given by Dr. Hitchcock, the American clergyman to whom I have before referred. I quote the work, though

here I am constrained to differ from him. We must, in reading a book, refuse what we cannot agree with, and accept what the author proves to be true. He gives three theories explanatory of the sad change which has been introduced, and he adopts the last himself. "The first theory," he says, "proceeds on the supposition that death is a universal law of organic nature, from which man was exempted so long as he obeyed the law of God." Dr. Pye Smith, recently deceased, a very eminent scientific scholar, as well as Christian man, belonging to the Independent body, held this theory; and he thought that man was created mortal, and tending to die, but that if he had continued in his allegiance to God, he would not have died. Death, he thought, was a universal law of organic nature; that the tendency of man was to die, but that God would have repressed that tendency, so long as Adam retained his allegiance to him.

The second theory which he quotes, is that espoused by the celebrated Jeremy or Bishop Taylor. "The second theory," says Dr. Hitchcock, "which will reconcile science and revelation on the subject of death, is one long since illustrated by Jeremy Taylor. And since he

could have had no reference to geology in proposing it, because geology did not exist in his day, we may be sure, either that he learnt it from the Bible, or that other branches of knowledge teach the existence of death as a general law of nature, as well as geology.

“ ‘ That death, therefore,’ says Taylor, ‘ which God threatened to Adam, and which passed upon his posterity, is not the going out of this world, but the manner of going. If he had stayed in innocence, he should have gone placidly and fairly, without vexations and afflictive circumstances ; he should not have died by sickness, defect, misfortune, or unwillingness. But when he fell, then he began to die ; the same day, (God said,) and that must needs be true ; and, therefore, it must mean upon that very day he fell into an evil and dangerous condition, a state of change and affliction, then death began ; that is, man began to die by a natural diminution, and aptness to disease and misery. Change or separation of soul and body is but accidental to death ; death may be with or without either ; but the formality, the curse, and the sting—that is, misery, sorrow, fear, diminution, defect, anguish, dishonour, and whatsoever is miserable

and afflictive in nature—that is death. Death is not an action, but a whole state and condition ; and this was first brought in upon us by the offence of one man.’ ”

The third theory, and that adopted by Dr. Hitchcock, is, that death is the universal law. “The third theory respecting death,” says he, “takes a more comprehensive view of the subject, and traces its origin to the Divine plan of the creation.

“In creating this world, God did not act without a plan previously determined upon in all its details. Of course, man’s character and condition formed prominent items in that plan.” And then he goes on to show what he believes ; that man was meant originally to die ; that if he had continued in his innocence, he would have died ; that all the brute creation was also meant to die ; and that if Adam had stood in his allegiance to God, Adam and Eve would have died, but, he says, softly and quietly, without violence, and merely in a sort of transference, almost unconscious as an infant’s sleep, till he should awake in a lovelier and a fairer world.

I must say, that on weighing these theories, and giving them the most patient study that I

can, I do not like any of the three. I like the old popular interpretation, which holds that Adam was not meant to die, and that the source of his death, and the death of that part of the animal creation created during the six days, was just Adam's sin. One fallacy that pervades these theories is, the assumption that the world was merely meant to be a temporary tent for man to dwell in, and that transference was his ultimate destiny. But we believe this world was meant for Adam's heaven and lasting home. God could not have been nearer to him, seeing that he walked in the cool of the evening in the garden, and conversed and held communion with him. And therefore the notion of transference as Adam's end I cannot grant. And if man was meant to continue always in this world, if this world had remained unfallen, then there was no necessity for death. I do not therefore see that this theory satisfies the scriptural record, or gives a conclusion that one can settle down in, as warranted by, and in harmony with, all the passages of Scripture, to which we will briefly allude, and which seem to me to establish the common belief, that all nature fell the instant that Adam fell, and that Milton's

Paradise Lost, whatever be its defects in other respects, gives a true statement of the Fall, and all its issues.

First then, in speaking of the sentence of death inflicted upon man and upon the brute creation, God does not say in so many words that death was inflicted on the brute creation in consequence of Adam's sin; but it is obvious that this conclusion may be gathered from allusions scattered throughout the book, in which there is implied a curse, and that curse unfolded by death lighting upon all the animal creation. At all events, the curse pronounced upon the serpent seems to involve a curse pronounced upon all the brute creation previous; it is said, "Thou art cursed *above all cattle*, and above every beast of the field." Surely, if the serpent had an aggravated and added curse, it implies that the other animals were partakers of the ordinary curse, and that therefore the whole animal creation came under God's curse at this crisis; what was the nature of it still remains for us to explain by subsequent passages. Finding the whole animal creation coming under the curse, and the serpent only under an aggravated form or degree of it, we try to ascertain

whether this curse means death. I turn to some passages where it is stated that animals were destroyed on account of man's sin. At Genesis vi. 7 there is the following passage, "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air." The beasts, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air had not corrupted their way during the antediluvian period; but man having done so, we have here an evidence that the brute creation participated in the consequence of man's sin; and that because the lord of creation sinned, all his subjects were involved in his ruin. So in Genesis vii. 23, "Every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth." And again in Genesis viii. 21, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done." Thus, we find in all these cases of

judgment pronounced upon man, the brute creation participating in it. And does not this seem to be the re-occurrence on a smaller scale of what had occurred on a larger scale? Does it not seem like a repetition in special cases of what had occurred in the universal case? And if animals, whenever man sinned, are always seen to be involved in the consequences of man's sin, we may see that what took place in these special cases under the providence, and wisdom, and benevolence of God, was only the unspent echo or unfaded image of what had taken place on a larger scale, when man sinned, and all the brute creation shared in his ruin. We see the extent of the curse, in its sweeping the ground of its richest beauty, depriving the air, as chemists have supposed, of some of its most vital and precious constituent elements, making the earth, which once burst into roses when Eve looked upon it, now bear only thistles, and briers, and thorns. The very fact that the earth thus suffered under man's sin involves the suffering of the brutes which lived upon that earth, and were dependent upon it for their nutrition and their food. And when we turn to the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we find

the apostle asserting substantially what I am now trying to prove. "For the earnest expectation of the creature" (creation) "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly,"—that is, it was not of its own accord, it was not the wish or act of the dumb brute creation,—"but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And then he says, "For we know that the whole creation," that includes the dumb brute creation, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." So strongly and so universally has this been understood to relate to the dumb animals, that some persons believe that brutes will be raised at the last day. Of course, they only guess, they cannot gather this from any clear passage of the word of God. The apostle adds, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Now, it does seem to me, that all these passages prove that the brute creation became par-

ticipants of death, because of man's primal and mother sin. But here the objection comes before us, how do you explain the fact which geologists assert, that death did exist prior to Adam? The geologist will say, you assert that death is the consequence of sin; but our discoveries in the subterranean caves of the earth show, written on records perfectly intelligible, that death and havoc existed in the animal creation long prior to the introduction of Adam's sin, the consequences and issues of Adam's fall.

In the first place, I observe in reply to this, that geology does not show death to have occurred in a single instance amongst the animals created during the first six days of creation as existent prior to Adam. All the animals that perished in those enormous masses seem to have belonged to a different climate, to a different condition of the globe, and to have been all of a more ancient race than those created during the six days before the crowning act of man's creation.

And in the next place, geology does not discover in the fossiliferous strata, as they are termed, which extend six or eight miles downwards, a single remain of man; it is in the highest allu-

vium only that it can discover his bones: and thus, geology proves demonstrably that man must have been created last; and the animals created during the six days found immediately below him, must have been created just before him.

What is the amount of the discoveries of geology? It is this, that death took place among animal races that existed long prior to the creation of man. And among these races they discover, what I think we cannot deny, that not only did animals die prior to the creation of man, but that they also devoured each other; because fossil remains have been found with one animal enclosed in the body of another, or crushed in the teeth of another. Thus the destruction of many of the monsters that have been excavated from the depths of the earth, prove that death and ruin had raged together long prior to the present configuration of our globe, and therefore long prior to the sentence pronounced upon Adam, "Thou shalt surely die."

Notwithstanding all this, I stand by the proposition in the word of God, that death is the consequence of sin. And to show how strongly this proposition is asserted, I turn to Romans v. 12, where the apostle says, in language that can-

not be mistaken, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." If we turn to 1 Corinthians xv. 22, we shall find these expressions: "As in Adam all die,"—that plainly is the death of the body, since he is speaking of its resurrection,—"even so in Christ shall all be made alive." In the 26th verse, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," that is, the death of the body. Then the 54th verse, "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written," that is, at the last day, "Death"—he is speaking of the resurrection of the body, and therefore he means physical death—"is swallowed up in victory." I appeal to every honest reader of the Bible, if his very first impression has not been that death is the wages of sin.

Since we discover the great fact, that death is the effect of sin, and secondly, the other fact, that death existed before Adam's sin was committed, how do we reconcile the latter discovery with revelation? I answer, we have evidence in the word of God, as well as in the world of God,

that sin existed before Adam's sin. We read of angels that revolted against God, of "angels which kept not their first estate," and are now plunged into everlasting darkness. We thus discover a great fact, that sin existed somewhere prior to the creation of man. Is it therefore improbable—I submit the thought for study—is it improbable that this earth was the habitation of angels in a long prior, and, it may be, still more glorious state? May it not be that the ruins and disorganization which geologists discover as occurrences in distant ages, are the wrecks of an angel Paradise existing long prior to the garden of Eden and the creation of man. I do not say that it is so. I throw out the conjecture for study. It is not written, it is merely guessed. Angels fell, and they committed sin, a greater sin than Adam and Eve. Who knows the height and depth and extent to which this sin of theirs may have gone? Who knows what havoc it may have brought upon creation all around them, how high toward heaven it may have reached, how deep toward earth's centre it may have shot? Who knows but that those subterranean traces of ruin, of disorganization, and of death, may not be the issues of angels' sin long prior to

Adam's creation, and that the wrecks and death that we see now are only the transference, not the first application, of a sentence, executed millions of years before, to a new dynasty introduced in new circumstances, and of which Adam was the federal head, who sinned and brought upon his race what angels brought upon theirs,—death, with all its misery, and all its woe. If this be the case, then the sentence of death pronounced upon Adam was not the creation of a new law, but the application of an old one; it was not the occurrence of a first fact, but the repetition of a long prior existent fact.

This, too, would explain how Adam and Eve should know what was meant by dying before they had sinned, and how they should know what evil was when they were only personally conscious of good. We may therefore conclude that the sentence, "In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die," was not the creation of a new penalty that never had been attached to sin before, but that it was only the declaration of an old one; and that it was not the occurrence of a new fact that never had transpired in the history of the universe before, but the repetition of a fact that had previously occurred in the

case of angels. Jude speaks of “the angels which kept not their first estate,”—(τῆν ἐαυτῶν ἀρχήν,) “their first state of dignity.” Where was their first state? We are not told, but it seems probable that it was on this globe in its first existence; and so it seems that what geologists have discovered as the traces of ancient ruin were introduced by the previous tenantry, and that we entered on a refurnished, not a new house. And thus this scripture is illustrated in the subterranean caves and sepulchral depths of the earth, as in every home and church-yard of our present economy—“The wages of sin is death,” and therefore that death had not been, if sin had not been previously committed. So much then for the attempt to reconcile what seems at first sight irreconcilable.

But there is another difficulty. Physiologists and anatomists say, Why then do we not find animals now as when they were first created? For instance, if we see a lion, we can at once perceive from his peculiar teeth, and visceral organization, that he is made to tear, to devour, and to live upon animal food. In the same way we infer, from the visceral organization of an ox, that he is meant to feed upon grass. And man

is so constructed, that it is plain from a study of his visceral organization, that he is meant to live upon animal food, or vegetable food, or both together. Then the question is asked, If death were introduced by sin, how does it happen that animals were constructed as we now find them? If not originally so made, how do we explain the change? Do you think the naturalist will believe that after man sinned carnivorous teeth came where graminivorous teeth were before, or that the whole visceral organization of the brute creation then radically altered? He will not: the lion and tiger were created, just as we find them, as far as relates to their physical organization; but I believe that they were so made because of God's sure and certain anticipation of what would occur—the sin of man, the fall of the world, and the necessity of creatures being adapted to a world altered because a world fallen. He made them, in anticipation of that, just as we now find them. We cannot say how long Adam retained his innocence. We cannot say what opportunity was given for the exhibition of these animals' propensities. But we know that a great deal of God's existing constitution of the world is anticipatory. The atone-

ment, for instance, was a primal fact; it was not an after-devised remedy for an untoward and unexpected disease, but it was set forth and arranged and spoken from the depths of eternity. I cannot explain why sin was permitted, or why man should be responsible, the atonement, and necessarily the fall, were fixed; nor can I explain many other things in God's creation. But I think it is in perfect harmony with many other analogies that God should have made carnivorous animals by an anticipative fiat, where he foresaw there would inevitably be death and ruin. That all would have been peace if sin had not intruded, our Lord's miracles seem to me to prove. They show what creation was before man fell, and what it would have continued to be had he not fallen, by giving instalments of what it will be when the re-gensis comes, and all things are rectified and restored again. His miracles were not merely feats of power, but they were essentially redemptive. When he healed the sick, when he opened the eyes of the blind, and restored hearing to the deaf; when he expelled the demons, when he raised the dead, when he restored broken relationships—in all these facts he not only evinced power, but he showed also

that the hand of the great restorer was touching creation's jarring strings, bringing them back to their ancient and primeval harmony, thereby showing to man what nature once was, and what nature shall again be, when he shall come, as he promised, and restore all things.

I gather from the word of God these indications or proofs of what is here asserted. I see no reason arising from geological discoveries, for departing from the old conviction, so universally, and, I think, so justly cherished, that death is the fruit of sin, and that wherever death's footprint is, there sin's stain has previously been.

No one looking at man as he now is, would come to the conclusion that he was made just as we find him. We cannot believe that man was made originally to die; there is nothing in the constitution of his body to indicate this as a primal law. On the contrary, medical men and physiologists have said, that if a stranger could come from another orb and examine the human body in full life, he would pronounce it a perpetual motion; that its machinery must go on for ever. There is no ultimate physical reason in the world, why, when man comes to fifty or sixty years of age, the crows' feet, as they are called,

should appear at each eye, and whiteness glisten from his hair, and infirmity, weakness, feebleness, decay, seize every limb. Such a change is explicable on other grounds than physical organization; it is only explained by the judicial sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

It is also worthy of remark, that facts lead to the presumption that after the Fall man did not die so soon as we do; for we shall read that the patriarchs lived, some seven hundred, some nine hundred, and some even a thousand years. It is worthy of notice that the sentence of death took effect by degrees, and after the flood only do we find man's life shortened to a period approaching its present length. The last time that it was shortened by God, the duration of our pilgrimage was reduced to one hundred and twenty years. Such, I believe, is the natural period of human life. There is no fiat of God shortening human life since then; and there is no passage in the word of God that will warrant the conclusion that the limit of man's natural life should be seventy years only. I know that some persons will ask, Have you not read the 90th Psalm, "The days of our

years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow?" But recollect when that Psalm was written, and by whom. In the first place, it was written by a man who lived to a hundred and twenty, and therefore this could not describe himself. And in the next place it proves, not confutes, my position; for Moses says, "Instead of our years, in this wilderness condition, being what they have been, they are reduced to threescore years and ten, and if we should stand the wear and tear of this condition and reach eighty, we find it labour and sorrow." This is a complaint that their years were so few, and that complaint embosoms the conclusion that properly and in better circumstances they were much longer. And as Moses, who wrote that Psalm, lived to a hundred and twenty years, I am still of opinion that if men were more temperate, and more attentive to sanitary laws, humanly speaking, a hundred and twenty would be their present age. If men were more sober-minded and attentive to their sanitary condition, if they would believe that their air is of more importance than their food, and that temperance and mo-

deration are the obligations that Christianity prescribes and prudence and experience suggest, they would live to a greater age, in all probability, than they do now. Much however of the shortness of life is still in consequence of the sin of man, and it is only the rebound of the ancient sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In proportion as Christianity attains its ascendancy in the heart of man, and its influence over all his habits, and in proportion as the precepts of apostles are transferred to the practice of daily life, man in some degree overcomes the state into which the primal sin has plunged him, and approximates to that glorious and ultimate state in which, when Christ shall come and restore lost paradise to rejoicing earth, all things shall be.

I cannot in this address enter upon the moral effects of man's sin. I will reserve that, with the great remedy, for my next. Let us learn, then, to look upon sin as essential evil; let us explain the sad and sorrowful experience of man, not by blaming God, but by blaming ourselves. Whence sin came, why sin was permitted, I cannot explain. All I gather from the Bible is, that nowhere is it said that God made it. He

made the sky, the sea, and he made the dry land; he made the hills, and the great deeps; he made the leviathan of Job, the crocodile of the Nile, the insect that flutters in the sun-beam, and the ephemeral that dies in a day; but I do not find that he made sin. Hence whatever sin has done is not God's doing; and wherever its responsibility lies, it rests not with him. O glorious grace, and O transcendent love! for when man had committed suicide, God, who had no hand in the suicide, has mercifully interposed himself, and in his love alone has provided, out of our death, life; out of our ruin, restoration; through the precious blood and the glorious sacrifice of Him who is the way, the truth, and, what poor Eve only was in type, the life, and the source of all living.

CHAPTER VI.

REDEMPTION.

“Redemption! ’t was creation made sublime.
Redemption! ’t was the labour of the skies :
Far more than labour, it was death in heaven.
A truth so strange, ’t were bold to think it true,
If not far bolder still to disbelieve.”

“And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field ; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life : and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children ; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it : cursed *is* the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife’s name Eve ; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil : and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”—GEN. iii. 14—24.

IN the former chapter I stated what we have here, the record of the curse pronounced in the

case of disobedience actually executed upon the offending and guilty pair. We endeavoured to show to what extent the sweep of that curse has ranged, and in what respects its operation is actual now among us. I stated my belief that death, whether in the material body of man, or in the animal creation, is the result of sin. We tried to meet the difficulty which geologists have brought forward, that death has been discovered prior to the last configuration of this world, or the work of the six days, and the creation of man; from which they argue, death cannot be the result of sin. We showed that, while it cannot be proved that death, as existent prior to the creation of man, was the result of his sin, we can show that sin existed long before the six days' work and the creation of man; for Jude tells us, what other portions of Scripture confirm, that angels first introduced sin by breaking their allegiance to God. Thus the wreck and death traced by geology in the subterranean chambers of the earth, confessedly thousands of years older than the Mosaic record, may be the fruits and the effects of that great first sin introduced by the fallen angels into the universe long before Adam and Eve

were created. But, whether this be true or not, the fact that animals now die, we showed, was in consequence of man's sin. We quoted instances where the sin of man is stated by the historical record to have been visited on the brute creation; and likewise clear and unequivocal testimonies of Scripture, that man's death—the death of his body—is the result of man's sin. “As in Adam,” says the apostle, “all die,”—he is speaking of the resurrection of the body,—“even so in Christ shall all be made alive;” that is, all—good and bad—shall be raised at the last day. We have, therefore, clear proof, I think, that wherever death is, whether in the chambers that geology has excavated, or on the platform of the world which we now see and live on, it is the fruit of sin. And, therefore, I do not believe that man or the brute creation was meant to die. It is very well to say, How could the world contain them? it is easy to raise a thousand difficulties: it is still the plain fact, that clearly runs through the Scriptures, that death is the fruit of sin. Accordingly, when God said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” it was not the creation of a new penalty, but the applica-

tion of a penalty that had been applied long, very long before.

There are also other fruits of sin ; “ I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” I need not comment upon these words. It has its echo in the experience of suffering womanhood. Every mother is my witness. “ And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” Just where Christianity is unknown, there the lordship of the husband hardens into tyranny ; and only in proportion as restorative religion, that is, Christianity, is felt, does the lordship of the husband soften into love. I do not think we can have a stronger proof of the fulfilment of this curse than in China, in Hindostan, in Turkey. We cannot have a clearer evidence that the curse has been so far averted or reversed than in Christian countries, where woman is raised to her proper platform, and made the companion, the friend, and the help meet for man, not his drudge, his servant, or his plaything.

It is also added, that “ the ground is cursed for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns also and

thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Who does not feel this? This sorrow and sweat of face is not peculiar to the agricultural interest; it is as distinctive of the commercial interest. If the farmer must water the earth with his tears, and fertilize its blasted soil with the sweat of his brow; the merchantman, the tradesman, has to undergo the same fatigue, and to feel the same exhaustion, only in another sphere. And as to those who are called the unproductive portions of the human race, or those who are supposed not to be the working classes, that is, lawyers, physicians, and clergymen, and such like, I suspect they feel the curse as truly as others. I believe myself to be a working man, only I use the brain instead of the hand; and whether the one prepare sermons, or write books, or run up ledgers, there is the same attendant fatigue. This universal curse is felt from the queen upon the throne down to the meanest of her subjects; for of all aching heads, that head often aches most that wears a crown. As Shakspeare says,

“ Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

“ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Let us now briefly allude to the moral part of the curse, but especially and more fully to the grand remedy ; that which was preached to meet it.

It is said, that when man fell their eyes were opened. Of course, morally and physically they saw before. Morally, they saw truth in all its beauty ; physically, they beheld Paradise in all its glory. But the expression which is here used, “ The eyes of them both were opened,” evidently means that they saw what they never expected to see, and felt within them what they never dreamt of feeling. They saw a blot descend upon the earth, barrenness upon all the acres that were most productive ; cold and storm, disturbance, disorganization, where all was beauty, harmony, and peace before. And they felt, I have not the least doubt, within them a new and disturbing element, which they could not understand—that sensation which we know, and which we have all felt, called remorse, or the feeling that succeeds conscious sin, but

which was then for the first time tasted by Adam and Eve. Sin now shot like fire through every vein, and rushed, a corroding poison, through every artery, till their once bounding hearts were breaking, and their happy spirits, oppressed by a crushing and inexplicable sense of misery, yearned and groaned for a deliverer. Is not this repeated still? While sin tempts the young man by its fascinations, his eyes are open to its beauty and its advantages, but closed to its issues. After he has been conquered by the temptation, and has yielded to the sin, then the process is reversed; his eyes are now shut to its charms, and open only to its poison and its hatefulness; and what approached him in the most fascinating garb, is now seen by him to be the most revolting and repulsive serpent: his eyes are opened to see the dissolving charm that fascinated him for a day, merging in the avenging curse that lies upon him like an incubus, till it be forgiven by the blood of Christ. Here still is Satan's policy: when he tempts to sin, the eye that sees peril is blinded, and the eye only that sees beauty is open; but when he has succeeded, then the eye that saw the beauty is closed, and the eye that sees

peril is opened: all was presumption, when only the beautiful and the advantageous were seen; all now is despair, when nothing but the deadly and the destructive are beheld. And strange it is, that though this experiment has been made upon the largest scale, yet each man has to learn it by paying the price of it in his own bitter experience. He too finds that his eyes have been shut to what they ought to have been open, and have been open to what they ought to have been shut; and only by the painful reaction of a remorse that corrodes, or of a repentance that comes from the Saviour, does he learn that his eyes have been opened to see a good that has vanished from his grasp, and an evil that has taken possession of the government of his soul.

It is likewise added, that "they knew that they were naked." They were so before; they knew this before; how was it that they saw it with so strange and startling a feeling now? They needed once no raiment in Paradise, because there were no chilling fogs, no cold, biting wintry nights; and they required none so far as the decent and becoming were concerned, for there was no sin, and therefore no shame. How

was it, then, that the instant the inner man had committed an offence against God, the outer man was discontented in the sight of God, in the sight of himself, and in the sight of one another? I believe that the real explanation of it was this:—They felt that they had lost something, they knew not what; and just as we see blundering physicians prescribing for the body when the mind is at fault, and is the originating cause of the mischief, so here poor Adam and Eve supposed that they had lost a raiment for the body, when they had lost and been denuded of the righteousness of the soul; and they attempted to clothe the body as the first instinct of their nature, in the vain and foolish hope that by so doing they should clothe the soul, and reinstate it in its pristine relationship to God which it had lost for ever.

They therefore took fig-tree leaves, “and made themselves aprons.” The fig-tree is supposed by some to have been “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Not that the fig tree could teach evil or good, since it was merely a sacramental sign, or symbol of God’s authority, and of Adam’s allegiance to the Sovereign of the universe. It has, however, been

alleged by some that the fig-tree was "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." This has been gathered from the fact that in the Scriptures, and in the proverbial expressions of nations, some instances of which I have before alluded to, a bad sense is given to the fig-tree. However this may be, they clothed themselves with fig-tree leaves; and they thought that while they concealed themselves one from the other, they therefore sufficiently concealed themselves from God, and satisfied the sense of loss they felt. Alas! is not this the picture of all of us? We fancy that when we conceal ourselves from ourselves, we have concealed ourselves from God. There is not a bush, nor a tree, nor a hole, nor a hill, nor a valley, into which man will not run to hide himself from God. And when at last he finds that the darkness hideth not from him, that the night becomes light to him, then he cries, not as the conclusion of his intellect, but as the aspiration of his heart, "No God!" Adam, by clothing himself and flying from God, hoped to screen himself from God, or at least to clothe himself with that which would put him right in his relationship to God. Perhaps it was his attempt to justify himself, to

make a righteousness of his own, to repair to himself all the damage he had done, and present himself to God again in clothing in which God would receive him. All this is enacted still, man will have recourse to a thousand expedients in order to get a right to heaven, if he can only avoid that divine and simple expedient, coming with nothing, but just naked as he is, to receive from Christ a righteousness to which he has no title, but wholly of grace, that God may have the glory, while we have all the benefit.

When they were thus clothed, they heard the voice of God in the garden. Thus arrayed in apparel of their own selection, the best that they could find, and the best that they could think of, one would have thought they could have stayed to hear the voice of God in the garden. But, it is said, when they heard that voice, they fled, and they sought to hide themselves; they were afraid. Why was this? That voice came to them in music in their early and better days; that foot-fall was the sweetest note in all the sounds and harmonies of Eden; that bright Light—that Jesus manifest to them in some of those forms in which he was revealed before his incarnation—was to them the noblest image they

could look on; his dear words, the most delightful they could hear. How had this harmony become discord? How had this foot-fall become suggestive of approaching peril? God was not changed; his purposes had not been broken, his promises had not failed. It was not on Sinai and amid thunder that he spoke; it was not in the blazing lightning or in the flashing fire that he came. Why then so appalled? Why afraid? Sin within makes cowards of us all; and wherever there is a sense of guiltiness in man's heart, there springs up the wish, either that there were no God, or that by some resource of his own he might escape from the cognizance and inspection of God.

The Lord did not allow Adam to escape from him, though Adam wished and tried to do so. We run from God, but he follows us; his right hand sustains us, and rescues us often from our greatest enemy, that is, ourselves. . "Adam," God called out, "where art thou?" What a startling question was that, "Where art thou"! How is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed! What a sad alteration! what a terrible catastrophe! "Poor Adam, what have you made yourself? Where art thou? What

hast thou done?" In reply Adam repeats the paltry and equivocal excuse, only in other words, which he had used before; and finally his day in Eden was closed, after he had heard in mercy the gospel, and he is driven out of Paradise. But why driven out of it? Because he had lost his only title to it, and the only fitness that could qualify him for its enjoyment. Perfect righteousness was his title to Paradise; this title he had lost. Fitness of character was Adam's qualification for Paradise; that fitness of character fled as soon as sin cast its shadow into his heart. In judgment, as in mercy, he was driven out of Paradise. The air of Eden he could breathe no more; he was now a patient fit for an hospital, where he could be cured, not for Eden, where the healthy, the holy, and the happy only were. He was a sinner, adapted to a state where sin had done its work; not a saint, whose joy would grow by continuing in the immediate presence of God. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," had now entered the sanctuary of his heart. All was wrong within; he was only fit, therefore, for a world that was all wrong without. And so he left Paradise, looking behind upon the

glory he had forfeited, and looking forward upon the barren earth which he was now doomed to till in the sweat of his brow. What a change must he have felt! Clouds, where all was sunshine—a vitiated air, where all erst was balm—thistles breaking forth in every acre, where he had only to look before, and responsive to his look the very earth burst into roses, and everything rejoiced; and instead of the groups of animals that used to cluster around him, and own him as their lord, he now went out into a menagerie of wild beasts, which rose against man with one consent, because man had risen against God. All was materially changed without, because all was morally changed within.

We have in this history the most rational account of the introduction of sin into our world. We have, in the next place, the most rational record of the consequences that followed from that sin. Shame painted itself upon the cheek, where sin had raised its throne within the heart: they were ashamed to approach God. Fear instantly took possession of the heart, where transgression had previously erected its throne. From being a free-man, because the son of God, Adam felt himself now the bond-slave of Satan,

—a law in his members warring against the law of his spirit, and bringing him captive to sin and death. In one word, he became dead morally, dead spiritually. Mortality seized upon every fibre of his frame, and from that moment his life, protracted as it was for many hundred years, was a ceaseless descent from perfect health to the closing stroke of death, when to the dust he returned, out of which he was originally taken.

But we read in the next place, that God did not leave man to the effects of his transgression; for he said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Although Christ should bruise Satan’s head, his heel should be bruised by the serpent’s stratagems and wiles. So far he proclaimed the subtlety of the serpent; and, while he pronounced punishment upon the serpent as a reptile, he still more proclaimed punishment to Satan, who made use of the dumb animal in order to execute so great and grievous, and too successful, an assault upon mankind.

We cannot read the New Testament without tracing allusions to the serpent. “That serpent,” “The dragon,” “The serpent,” “The

old serpent." (Rev. xii. 9.) And the apostle Paul speaks of the serpent beguiling them, evidently alluding to Satan as the tempter of mankind.

The woman's seed here spoken of, is, no doubt, the Saviour; and the prediction is, that from the very race that had become the subjects of Satan's victory should proceed One who should bruise Satan's head, reverse the havoc of the fall, restore all things, and replace man in his forfeited relationship to God. We have in these words the first evangelical sermon that was ever preached. We have here the glorious gospel sounding amid the wrecks of Paradise; a bright rainbow arching the earth, and indicating a pathway back to God; a voice sounding from between the cherubim, and speaking of a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, who should destroy the works of the devil, bruise Satan under his feet, and proclaim to the whole universe mercy and truth that have met together, and righteousness and peace that have kissed each other, over his sacrifice, and in the forgiveness of them that have sinned against God.

The very first effect, then, of the proclamation of the gospel to Adam, was his own restoration,

He laid aside the fig-tree leaves that he had selected himself, and he was clothed in an entirely different apparel. It is said, God clothed him with the skins of animals. The instant that he heard the gospel we find him laying aside the clothing of his own selection, and thenceforth being clothed with the skins of animals. Now no animals had probably died, on account of the shortness of the time that had elapsed since the fall; animals were not then slain for food; and the presumption therefore is, that these animals were slain for sacrifices; and especially does this become probable, when we find that the first sacrifice that Abel made was a slain lamb, which offering God accepted, whilst he did not accept the bouquet of flowers which Cain laid on his altar. The presumption is, therefore, that these animals were slain for sacrifices. In their blood Adam saw the type of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and in their skins substituted for his own preferred fig-tree leaves, he saw the type of that righteousness which was substituted for his own righteousness, and in which he could be arrayed as in raiment white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints. In the blood of

the slain animals he saw the foreshadow of Christ's sacrifice by which God forgave his sins ; in their skins, wherewith he was clothed, he saw Christ's righteousness imputed to him, in which alone he was justified. In Christ's work there are two distinct aspects. By what he suffered in his death, our sins are blotted out ; by what he did in his obedience to the law, we are justified. By Christ's blood-shedding we escape the penal sentence of eternal death ; but it is by Christ's obedience that we merit the reward that we have justly forfeited. Thus, Christ's passive sacrifice, by which we are forgiven, and Christ's active obedience, or the righteousness by which we are justified, were vividly proclaimed to Adam amid the wreck and clouds and chaos that he had brought upon himself, and there and then he was taught to lift up his heart, and, instead of despairing, hope for that reparation which we know will be accomplished in the fulness of the times.

The only thing that has perplexed some in regarding this passage as the proclamation of the gospel, is the fact that it was addressed to the serpent, and not to Adam and Eve. Very naturally it has been asked, Why did God pro-

claim this glorious promise to the vile serpent, and not directly to Adam and Eve? Perhaps it may have been especially to abase and humble the guilty pair, by showing them that that God whom they had offended, was separated from them by their sins. But it is plain that, although he told the serpent this promise, he gave it for Adam and Eve, as well as to Adam and Eve. They heard the promise, and rejoiced in the gospel it unbosomed, whilst they were humbled by the truly humbling fact, that God did not speak to them directly until they had accepted the truth, been reinstated in their lost relationship, and, from being strangers, had been made again the friends and the followers of the Lamb. Or God may have addressed these words to the serpent first, in order to evolve his own glory. In other words, God would fore-show that this great interrupter of a happy world must be destroyed, before he would proclaim this glad news which would bring joy to the hearts of the guilty. It may have been meant to indicate the subjugation of the evil, that subjugation evincing the power of Him who should accomplish it; or that his glory must be compatible with the promise of a Saviour, and with the

mercy and forgiveness which it embosomed for Adam and Eve, and for all that should believe in the name of Jesus. In other words, it may have been designed to prove that the Father was not to overshadow the Judge ; that mercy must not be the grave of justice ; that sin could only be forgiven in a mode that should vindicate the ways of God to man, and prove that he was just, and holy, and true, while he justified and freely forgave the guilty that believed in Jesus.

Thus we have the gospel preached in Paradise, and justification by faith alone—its distinctive and peculiar dogma—proclaimed some six thousand years ago. Adam and Eve were Protestants. The first sermon that they heard was emphatically a Protestant one. “ Christ and him crucified ” was the text ; “ Christ and him crucified ” was the sermon ; and these two transgressors were the first congregation that listened to it, and the first true church that loved and lived it. God told them, “ I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Adam and Eve heard substantially these words, “ I have made him to be sin for you, who knew no sin ; that you, who have committed this great primal sin, might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2 Cor.

v. 21.) Or rather, if it were Jesus who preached the sermon, as we believe it was, then he substantially said to them, "Come unto me, Adam and Eve, weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. My awful agony to be endured shall prevent yours. My incarnation shall restore the earth to a better Paradise. My tears shall christen, my blood shall re-consecrate it; my pierced hands shall lift you to a height of glory, higher far than that from which you fell; and your last estate shall be better, more glorious, and more triumphant by redeeming grace, than the first was by creative power."

Thus the great way of perfect acceptance through the blood of Jesus is as old as the Fall, was preached, as with a trumpet voice, in Paradise, was not there a doctrine of reserve, as some have wished it to be, but the prominent proclamation—the Alpha and the Omega—the very pith and substance of the first promise that was uttered. There was indicated in this very promise that the restoration was to be effected by sufferings then yet to be endured; for it is said that, while Satan's head was to be bruised, the Saviour's heel was to be hurt in doing so. And what is this but the early epitome

of the statement, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings?" (Hebrews ii. 10.) In other words, it is the indication, that through death Jesus should destroy him who had the power of death; and therefore, that the sufferings of Christ were not the patient endurance of the martyr attesting the sincerity of his convictions, but the expiatory agonies of the Victim making atonement for all the sins of all that believe. Refuse to believe that the sufferings of Jesus were expiatory, and you exhaust Christianity of its life-blood; you deny us that which is the basis of our brightest, our dearest, our eternal hopes; you make Christianity the revelation only of a more perfect standard, and to man, therefore, the vehicle of only a more thorough and hopeless despair. What man needs in his ruin is, not the knowledge of what he should be, for that he knows too well, but the process by which he may be restored to what he should be. When we go into an hospital, the physician does not point to the standard of pure health, and merely say that is what you should be. If he did,

you would tell him that he was placed in the ward, not to tell you how far you are in a state of sickness, but to tell you how you may be restored to the health that you have lost. We are patients in a moral sense; we are sufferers, because we are sinners; and what we need is, not a re-publication of the law that we have broken, nor a re-exhibition in brighter light of a standard that we have not conformed to, or of an archetypal glory we have fallen from, but the manifestation of a curative, restorative process, by which the wrong may be righted, and the disease healed; in other words, an atonement and sacrifice by which our sins may be blotted out, and our nature renewed. All this is contained in the promise proclaimed in Paradise. Adam and Eve had the type of it in the slain animals, and in the cross and in Calvary we have the fact and fulness of it.

It follows from all this, that our present life must be more or less a ceaseless struggle. The serpent's power, it is said, shall bruise the Saviour's heel. And what took place between Christ and Satan, is perpetuated in those who are Christ's and those who are Satan's. Well did our Lord say, "I am not come to send peace

on earth, but a sword." Whenever the church is very quiet, we have too much reason to fear it is very corrupt. Stir, agitation, conflict, battle,—these are the inevitable characteristics of an age in which the world feels that it is losing ground, and the church, overflowing with life, strives after her great and everlasting destiny. Two great eternities are at issue; the battle-field is time; souls are the prizes. How great must those souls be, for which two eternities battle! how important is that creature for whom heaven and hell are in conflict! and how precious is that promise which announces, that the issue of that battle is fixed and predetermined from everlasting ages; that Satan shall be utterly discomfited; that error shall be finally laid prostrate; that all that is evil shall be rooted out of this earth, and that all that is bright, and beautiful, and holy, and happy, shall characterize it once more; that whatever Satan has clouded shall be purified; that whatever Satan has convulsed with fever, or infected with disease, shall regain perfect health; that wherever the trail of the serpent is, there the foot-print of the King of kings shall be; that wherever Satan's empire now is, there Christ's

kingdom shall spread, he shall reign for ever and ever, and put all things under him; and the last enemy that he shall destroy is death, and when he has put this under him, then God in Christ shall be all in all! (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.)

We have an indication in this promise that Jesus must be more than man. I should infer from this very text, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head," that Christ must be God. It is asked, how? In this way: Adam in the midst of a garden, in perfect innocence, in the most favourable circumstances in which humanity was ever placed, or could be placed, was tempted by Satan; he yielded, and was overcome. But one was to emerge from Adam, who in a wilderness should be also tempted by Satan, in the most unfavourable circumstances, while clothed with a humanity that was no stranger to fatigue, and pains, and tears, steeped in sorrows, and penetrated by a thousand agonies: yet there, and in such circumstances, He overcame and discomfited the wicked one, and was more than conqueror, and finally nailed powers and principalities to his cross, and made a show of them openly. If then humanity in Adam fell before the tempter in the most favourable circumstances

in which humanity could be placed, we must infer that the humanity which met the tempter in the most unfavourable circumstances, and bruised his head, and gloriously triumphed, must have been allied to God; and that Jesus therefore was none less than God himself, "the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace." (Isa. ix. 6.)

We learn that this promise and the gospel it contains are for all mankind. The first Gospel was preached, not to the Jews, for there were no Jews in existence then—I mean, as distinguished from Gentiles,—but to all mankind, since it was preached to Adam and Eve as the representatives of all humanity. Every false creed is local; but this glorious embassy of heaven, this musical promise of glad things, this offer of forgiveness to the guilty, has nothing in it of locality or restriction; it is catholic in the noblest sense of that expression. It has all space for its parish, all ages for its action, and all men for its audience; and all are welcome to taste of the living bread, and to eat of its fruits, and to participate in its enduring blessings.

On whose side are we? Are we with the serpent, or with the bruiser of the serpent's head?

This is a momentous question at all times ; it is emphatically so to the aged ; it is practically so to every young man and young woman. On whose side are you, dear reader ? I do not suppose that you are actively enlisted against the Saviour, but you need not to be reminded that he himself has said, that he who is not with him is against him, and that he who gathereth not scattereth. If therefore you neglect the great salvation, for all practical purposes you reject it ; and if you neglect or reject it, you may disguise it as you like, you may wear the uniform you please, you are on the serpent's side, and with his your head must be bruised ; you are not upon the Saviour's side, nor with him destined gloriously and finally to triumph. But if you are now on the wrong side, there is no reason why you should be there a single day more. Christ asks the transference of your sympathies ; he bids you pass from the side where you ought not to be to that side where you are welcome to be. He asks no sacrifice, he asks no surrender, except that you will put on his uniform, that you will come under his banners, that you will ally yourselves to his cause, and that you will do it, not merely because it is duty, but because

it is instant, unspeakable, and enduring delight. If, therefore, I address any one who is careless or hostile, I ask, why do you continue so? What profit is there in the service of sin? What prospects of victory are there where God has predicted only defeat? What enjoyment is there in the service of sin? Is it not weariness? It costs a man more to work his way to ruin, than ever it costs a Christian in sacrifice to find his way to heaven? No one gets to ruin except amid protests from his conscience, struggles in his heart, warnings, remorse, regrets, repentance, and a management that requires so many tactics, such cleverness, such equivocation, such trouble, that I am sure it is an unhappy thing to be in the way that leads to woe, and that it must be the happiest of all things to have a single eye, a body full of light, our hearts set upon our home, and our treasure where our God and our Saviour is. If therefore you are on that side on which there is no happiness, and where the wages are only death, and the certain issue eternal disaster, defeat, and ruin, I invite you to become the soldier of the great Captain of the faith, to put on the whole armour of God, "having your loins girt about with truth, and

having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked ; and taking the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, stand stedfast, immovable, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (Eph. vi. 14—17 ; 1 Cor. xv. 58.) The service of Satan is misery upon earth, disappointment bitter and corrosive at the judgment-seat. The service of Christ is freedom and happiness upon earth, and joy unspeakable and full of glory in eternity. Choose you this day, dear reader, whom you will serve. Decide. I could not remain a single day without determining whether this Christianity preached from so many pulpits, circulated in so many tracts, described in so many books, be a mere piece of priestcraft, a cunningly devised fable, or the wisdom, the inspiration, and the power of God. It can be nothing but the greatest lie, or the most instant, intense, and absorbing truth ; it is nothing between. He who feels neither enthusiastic in the cause of Christ, nor fanatic in the cause of Satan, is an inconsistency, an inex-

plicable inconsistency ; he is neither cold nor hot, yet he is not less guilty. But the man who goes forth under the banner of the pope, or the infidel, to put down the religion of the Bible, is at least a consistent man ; so too he who goes forth with the name of Jesus in his heart, to cover the earth with his trophies, is a consistent man ; but anything between is a huge and gigantic inconsistency, a contradiction, and a blunder. I can see but one method of escape from the wrath to come ; I know of no other ; that method which was preached in Paradise, and is proclaimed in the gospel—Christ Jesus. This is salvation ; and if it be not, there is no truth in the Bible, and no hope worth having in a Christian heart. But “ we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day ; ” and that we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we preached and you accepted Christ as all our salvation, and all our desire.

CHAPTER VII.

MISSIONARY DUTY.

“Where is your heathen brother? From his grave
Near thy own gates, or 'neath a foreign sky,
From the thronged depths of ocean's moaning wave,
His answering blood reproachfully doth cry.
Blood of the soul! Can all earth's fountains make
Thy dark stain disappear? Stewards of God, awake!”

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?”—GEN. iv. 9.

THE question itself, “Where is Abel thy brother?” is not a local or a temporary one. It may be asked in every age, uttered in every tongue, and addressed to every inhabitant of every latitude, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Before, however, I immediately discuss it, or endeavour to show its bearing upon us, I would notice two or three preliminary facts.

First, the earliest death on record was a sudden one. Whether the heart be arrested by the stab of the assassin's sword, or by the touch of the finger of God, no doubt it is equally a sudden death. Life in such a case is

not suffered gradually to uncoil ; the spring is broken, and the machinery stands still. But sudden death is no evidence of the disapprobation of God. We are apt to say, that the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell must have been disapproved ; and, on the other hand, that they who escaped must have been approved by God. It is not so. The first saint upon earth who died, died suddenly ; and, therefore, sudden death may be as much an evidence of special favour as of the reverse. Perhaps it is special favour. It is in most cases death without the pangs of dying ; it is leaping from the body beyond the horizon, and finding oneself at one bound amid the glories of a better and a brighter land. Sudden death is thus sudden glory. Abel, the most distinguished saint of his day, was the first instance of sudden death.

Another interesting fact strikes us here, the first death was that of a Christian. There is something beautifully touching in this. If the first death had been that of Cain, it would have been seen in all its horror. Up to this moment, death was only known as a word, it was not known as a fact ; it was embosomed in the curse, it had not yet seized its victim : but if the

first victim had been guilty Cain, the ungodly, man would have witnessed, perhaps, a spectacle too terrible for his yet unhardened sensibilities to bear; he would have seen destruction enter as death physical, death spiritual, and death eternal, all the wages of sin, in one dread stroke. But when it came first upon the saint of God, it introduced itself, the sure evidence of the curse, not in the shape of the tyrant spectre, but rather under the sign of a peaceful sleep; thus the first grave, notwithstanding the previous accompaniments of cruelty, was irradiated by the rays of the Sun of righteousness, and was revealed in the splendour of those beams as a vestibule of glory, a porch of heaven.

Yet the first death was that of a martyr, as if to tell us that the struggle between the woman's seed and the serpent had begun; as if to reveal to us by a great fact, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Through tribulation ye must enter the kingdom." "Wherefore did Cain slay Abel? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

We thus learn three important facts. First, that sudden death is no more an evil than protracted death; and secondly, that the first death

was that of a Christian, whereby God softened the curse, and mitigated it to the utmost; and lastly, that it was also that of a martyr, to teach us that this world is not the place for the present triumph of light and love, for “a rest remaineth” is not yet for the people of God.

I now pass to the more immediate question before us. I assume that every man that has a want to be supplied, is my brother; that every human being who needs something that I can easily, or even by sacrifice, bestow, is my brother; and when I am asked, “Where is thy brother?” an answer, not an echo, is demanded from me; I pray it ever may be a far different one from that of Cain.

But still, I must presume, there are various classes to whom that question may be addressed, and from whom various replies would come. Some men would answer, if I were to ask, “Where is thy brother?” “What is that to me? I have enough to do with myself; I have plenty to do with minding my own business; I cannot attend to other people’s affairs. What is that to me?” Suppose every person were of the same temper, this repulsive *noli me tangere* temper, this intense absorption in self, then all society would

present only sharp, bristling points, each repelling all that was nearest to itself. Such things as hospitals for the sick,—those blossoms on the stem of life ; and asylums for the needy,—those evidences of Christian charity ; and missionary societies for the ignorant and unenlightened,—those exponents of the value and vitality of the gospel of Christ,—would utterly disappear. Each man caring for his own wants, however small, and regardless of the wants of his brother, however weighty, would soon drive society into suicide. It would cease to cohere, because of the exhaustion of that only cement, confidence and mutual love, which prevents it from exploding into fragments, and disappearing altogether from the earth on which it is reared. We have, therefore, an interest in a brother, if we wish society itself to cohere. I presume no Christian would say, “ What have I to do with a brother ? I have enough to do with myself.” He would show thereby that he cannot be a subject of true religion, if such were his expressions.

But others will say, if the question, “ Where is thy brother ?” be put to them,—“ You will find,” they will say, “ there is not a single sufferer

who is not so by his own misconduct. I will not give this applicant relief; for I know it is his crimes, or his indolence, or some indiscretion in his past life, that have led him to want it." Suppose it be so, suppose every beggar you meet is a criminal, that poverty is in every case the fruit of sin, are you not to mitigate the sufferings of the child, because of the sins of the parent? are you to shut your eyes to present misery, however great, in order that you may open them to past delinquencies, however old, or however trivial? Is it not enough that God exacts the penalty, are we to try to increase it? Is it not God's prerogative to avenge? Is it not man's noblest characteristic to have pity, compassion, and forbearance? And if God were to deal with us as we profess to deal with a brother, where should we be, where should we eternally be, when time itself is no more?

Another, when the question is put to him, "Where is thy brother?" would probably reply, "I have been so often disappointed, so often cheated, that I can submit to it no longer; I am satisfied," he will say, "if I help that brother who applies to me, I shall get no thanks for it." Very likely not. And if you do good

in order to get thanks for it, then what better are you than the Scribes and the Pharisees? They love their friends, they assist their own companions; but our Lord says, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you: for if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" If you do good only to anticipate reward upon the earth, very likely you will miss that reward in many a case where you expect it. But if you do good because of our Master in heaven, leaving the thanks to follow or not to come, as may be the influence of his grace, then we shall not be disappointed upon earth; and we shall show that magnificent, because Divine, spirit, which is indicated in the showers and the sunbeams that fall upon the just and upon the unjust. At the same time, I do not believe in the aphorism I have tried to reply to; I do not hold that the general experience is that most men will be unthankful for benefits received. If you fling a shilling to a poor man, and speak to him in opprobrious language, surely you cannot expect much gratitude. He sees

that you bestow your money, not as the exponent of your love, but to get rid of him : and to expect thankfulness in such case is to expect what nature will not yield. But if you give your money, and give with it the expression of a sympathizing and a feeling heart, I believe you will get thanks. I do not think that society is utterly a pandemonium, though it is not altogether a paradise. In the natural heart, in its most distant aberration from God, there are unextinguished sympathies with its grand original, that will respond with gratitude for benefits bestowed. And if the feet of mercy will more frequently tread the threshold of the needy, depend upon it, songs of gratitude will be oftener heard there. If there be no gratitude, the fault is less in the recipient of the bounty, and more in the manner and the language of him who bestows it.

If I ask another, "Where is thy brother?" he will answer, that in religious matters, to pass to another sphere, every man's creed is his own business ; I have no right to interfere with him, I must let him take his own way to heaven, his religion being no business of mine. Suppose that God had felt so to us ; suppose that Paul

had said, "My own religion is my own matter, and the religion of the ancient Britons is good enough for them;" or suppose that the distant heathen had been dealt with by us in the same manner, they had still been in their darkness. Man's religion is first his own matter, but it never is exclusively his own matter. It is just like man's charity, it is to begin at home, but it is not to stop there. The first question we must ask is, "What must I do to be saved?" but the very next is, "What must I do that my neighbour may be saved?" But I put it to every man's feelings; if a man has lost his way to heaven, and is groping in darkness, is it no business of ours to tell him what is the true way, when we know it? When a man is proceeding to the brink of a precipice blindfold, is it not our business to tell him that he will be dashed to pieces on the rocks below if he proceed a few feet further? Every privilege is given us, not for ourselves, but for others. God never made a man rich for himself; he never gave a man a coronet for his own brow only; he never gave a man religion for his own heart only. God's plan for evangelizing mankind is, to evangelize the individual, and then to make him the vehicle of

evangelic light and evangelic love, until all within the reach of his power is enlightened, and saturated, and sanctified by his munificent influence. We are, therefore, made religious for others.

If you should say, that if a man be perfectly sincere, in his religious views, it is enough: let him alone; why disturb him? This is a very favourite aphorism. We are all aware that the Mahometan is perfectly sincere in his acceptance of the Koran; that the Hindoo is perfectly sincere, conscientious, and—what Christians are not always—enthusiastic in his acceptance of the Shaster; many a Roman Catholic is self-sacrificingly sincere in his acceptance of the Missal and the Breviary. Well, what should all this teach us? To honour the men, but no less to abhor the creed. The man's sincerity is evidence how much good the Fall has not destroyed; but the creed is proof how corrupt sin and superstition have made him. Because a man is sincerely wrong, I will love him for his sincerity, and I will try only the more to put his convictions right. Sincerity neither consecrates sin nor canonizes error.

Where, then, is thy brother? No apology, no excuse, is satisfactory to show that you have not

duties, obligations, responsibilities to him. And God only knows how much of the darkness that is in the lanes and alleys of this great city, how much of the heathenism that grows and thickens and deepens like a dark cloud over us, may be the result of our apathy, or our indifference, for which, in the sight of God, we are all and each responsible to him.

But suppose, without reference to possible objections such as I have stated, I try to answer the question, "Where is thy brother?"

First, let me answer it, if I may so speak, geographically. Where is thy brother? He is under Africa's suns, or he is just living, and no more, amid polar snows. He is amid the steppes of Tartary,—a savage; or amid the swarthy millions of Asia,—a devotee to superstition. Ignorant he is also in all cases of God; his work-shop, the birth-place of his deities; his religion, superstition; his soul, without God, without Christ, and without hope. And yet, that African, so bigoted, is thy brother; that Tartar, so savage, is thy brother; that worshipper of the wooden god in the little "swamy house," as they call it, in Hindostan is thy brother; and there is a link between that dark heathen and thee, which will

only appear more luminous and real amid the light of a judgment-day.

But let me look at the subject in another point of view; let me regard the answer to the question in its religious aspect. Where is thy brother? He has left his slippers at the door, and he is prostrate on the floor of the mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, or the mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople; and his prayers, and praise, and creed are all in one fervent expression,—“God is great, and Mahomet is his prophet.” Or he is at St. Peter’s at Rome, where the superstition is only revealed more palpably by the scattered lights of truth that are in it. In either case, that worshipper who counts his beads on the floor of St. Peter’s, or that Moslem who shouts “God is great, and Mahomet is his prophet,” on the floor of St. Sophia’s, is thy brother; and a responsibility towards him rests upon us, which we can no more shake ourselves loose from than we can shake off our immortality, or escape the certainty of our appearance at the judgment-seat of Christ. Or, perhaps, I might answer it in another way. He is in some dark lane, or in some miserable hovel in the streets of some great city,

with a large family, with a very small weekly income, living in a place where fresh air is a complete stranger, where the policeman is the most frequent visitor, where the drainage is so bad that the absence of cholera is a miracle, its presence a matter of course; he has a wife and many children, he has no means of providing sufficiently for their food, much less the means of providing for their education. These children will be found on a Sunday morning, and on a Saturday evening, hanging about the streets in clusters, the ripe victims for the gaol, or the police station, or—not an inactive operator in such cases—the Roman Catholic priest. Those children are our children, that father is our brother; and the very knowledge that he cannot help himself, nor his children, entails instant responsibility upon us to lend him a helping hand, and to provide for those children a suitable school. If we say, We cannot accept it; then we shall be made to feel it. Do you think that your taxes become lighter, because you escape giving a sovereign to our schools? We shall find that the most expensive treatment of all is that by the policeman, and the gaol, and the penal colony; and that the most eco-

nomical treatment for a nation to pursue, is to work through the school, the city missionary, the tract distributor, the district visitor.

We shall soon discover that, not only is it the most economical, but it is the most healthy mode. You never can elevate a people physically, unless contemporaneously you elevate them morally. I am one of those who believe that there is a vast work to be done in raising the physical condition of the people around us, before a great and triumphant work can be done in doing good for their souls. Positively, to go into some of the homes, and to speak about the soul while the body is diseased, and struggling with hunger, without fire, and without shelter, and without a pane of glass, in the cold and biting frost of winter, is impossible. You must first find a blanket to cover, and bread to give; and then you will get a willing ear for the things that belong to his soul. I believe that the moment a city missionary, a tract distributor, or a Sunday-school teacher is introduced, and as soon as these children, accustomed to all that is base and darkening in human society, are brought within the elevating, the ennobling, and the sanctifying influence of

Christian instruction, you strike a blow that will make the wilderness about you rejoice, and its most desert places to blossom even as the rose.

Where is then thy brother? He is the stray sheep that has gone from the fold, he is the poor prodigal feeding upon husks. And if you want to see what thy brother is, leave the picturesque description of the poet, close the beautiful romance, open the Scriptures, hear the verdict of Him who died for human kind, what is the condition of human nature,—a lost sheep, a wandering prodigal, an infidel Sadducee, a hypocritical Pharisee,—perishing, dying, beyond the sound of light, and life, and truth,—and you will behold what a brother is. And if you want to see a sister, read the tale of the Turkish wife, study the picture of the Indian mother, or the life of the Hindoo widow; and in that Turkish wife, in that Indian mother, in that Hindoo widow, you have the picture of your sister. When you ask, where is thy brother? or where is thy sister? know that the broad road that leads to ruin is beaten smooth by brothers' and sisters' feet. The prison, the penal settlement, the Old Bailey, the Penitentiary, the tread-

mill, the model prison—every cell of them is filled with those that are our brothers and our sisters. That home of poverty where all man's original affections are abased or broken,—that squalid hovel where horrid appetite alone holds its terrible supremacy, where fancy sheds no beauty, where faith creates no purity, where hope gives no consolation, where holiness has no sanctuary, where prayer has no altar, and the sabbath has no service,—that squalid home where the sun rises upon no morning prayer, and sets upon no evening praise, where intemperance makes man a fiend and woman a wreck, where beauty is turned to corruption, and all the gladness and the glory of humanity is gone,—that home contains those who are thy brethren. There, rich one,—there, great one,—there, noble and wealthy one,—is thy brother,—the same flesh, the same blood with thyself,—just what thyself would have been if thy circumstances had been otherwise; and where, because thy circumstances are different, thou art called upon to go as an angel of light, and life, and mercy; and to rescue man from the brutality of sin, and enfranchise him with all the glory and the freedom of the children of God. Brothers sow our

fields, brothers temper the steel for our swords, brothers man our ships, brothers fight our battles.

Let us hail in humanity one grand brotherhood, as we hail in Christianity one lofty Fatherhood; and feel that wherever a heart beats, there is a brother seeking for our sympathy, our assistance, and our aid, and to whom all are due.

What is the first step to ennoble man, degraded as we have just now spoken of him? The very first step is to treat him kindly. The very plan to turn the earth into a hell, is to go near a brother with suspicion, doubting very much what he says, though it may be right to investigate; suspecting every representation, which ought indeed to be examined; acting upon the wretched principle, which, it has been said, is the practice of our Scotch countrymen, to suspect him to be a thief, and then wait till you prove him honest. This is the way to make him worse. Suspect him to be honest, and trust him, and then wait and see if he play the thief, is the way to make him better. To begin by suspecting a man to be dishonest, is just the very way to make him worse. You turn the inof-

fensive worm, when you tread upon it, into a snake that will instantly rise and sting you to the heart. By this suspicion you tread out the last sparks of confidence, and you create that dense and terrible despair, in which all dark deeds are perpetrated. There is no other way of making society better, than the old way of loving it. And if that grand principle of love were made the visible basis of all our movements to regenerate society, our progress would be much more rapid and complete. Why was Christ so beloved by the common people? when the Pharisees fled from him, when the Sadducees scoffed at him, it is said, "the common people heard him gladly." Because in that Divine heart every pang and sorrow of man found a resounding echo. Because men could go to Jesus, and feel that there was sympathy there, if there were sympathy nowhere in the world besides.

Do not let any outward circumstances repel us from men. Sometimes human misfortune becomes so dreadful that disgust is excited, where there ought to be only deeper and more penetrating sympathy. If we have been made to differ, it is by Him whose sovereignty is seen in all. And because circumstances have de-

graded that person who seeks our charity on the plea that he is a brother, do not think that he is in his real substance a worse being than yourself. Kingly men are found at looms, and at mills, and in shops. Queenly women are found among sempstresses. Noble hearts beat under very plebeian rags. The difference between the diamond that is set in the queen's crown and the diamond that is buried in the earth is simply in the polishing; all the difference between the humblest and the most degraded poor man, and the most exalted prince that sways a sceptre, is not in him, but out of him. God has made us all of one flesh; and the readiest way to make our own splendour more glorious is to raise our brother to a participation of it. And if you can say, What will become of the world when all become diamonds, and when all are so educated that they will not work? it will be time enough to answer that question when the result has taken place; and if they should all be diamonds, why then it will be an approximation to that apocalyptic temple, which is built only of precious stones; and when all will not only be brethren, but saints by grace, and heirs of the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

Never does greatness appear so great as when it lends a portion of itself to make littleness somewhat less. Never does wealth appear so holy as when it is consecrated to make the miserable happy, and the ignorant to learn the truth which alone makes free. It is said in classic history, that a statuary, who resolved to cut out of the Parian marble a female figure, the most beautiful and graceful that the world ever saw or the poet ever dreamed of, induced all the beauties of Greece to come to him in succession, while he selected from each the feature that was in the highest perfection, and transferred it to the marble on which he was working; and when this beautiful thing was finished, it became the admiration of Greece and of the utmost bound of Europe. But each Greek female felt that she was honoured by having some feature of her own in that exquisite creation of the statuary's chisel. So, when you can look into our schools, when you can look into society, and feel that some portion it is, by grace, the creation, under God, of what you have sacrificed and done, you will have more than a reward in the result, and you will know and taste a happiness you never tasted

before,—the inestimable luxury of having done good.

But there are those who have no doubt of these things, who feel a sympathy with a brother wherever that brother is. Such will regard it as one of the best and noblest expressions of their sympathy to aid in educating the young. Those children in the lanes and alleys of St. Giles' are not vile weeds to be trodden down, or cast into the fire, or thrown to Botany Bay across the sea into your neighbour's garden. They are but trampled flowers,—flowers as beautiful as those that grow in your own sheltered garden, if they had the same soil, and the same sun, and the same sweet air: and all we ask is, that you would just gather up those trodden-down flowers, and replace them under the beams of the true Sun, that you would put them in a wholesome air; and they will become yet the ornaments, where now they are the pests of the neighbourhood; and will be transplanted into the Paradise of God, and under the shadow and the shelter of the Tree of Life that grows in the midst of it. The children of to-day are the future inhabitants of our different colonies; and if we send them out converted and Christianized, instead of being

repealers of the connexion between the parent country and the distant colonies, they will be indissoluble links between them: these children will be the champions of a throne under the shadow of which they have been blessed, and sticklers for the national institutions which have been to them springs of refreshment; we shall look back upon the schools we have built, and the sacrifices we have made, with a joy far greater than that with which a student looks back upon his college, or an architect upon his magnificent creation, or the sentimentalist upon the beautiful cathedral, or the statesman upon successful policy: for in such cases we have been instrumental in adding subjects to the kingdom of God, and building up living temples that will last for ever and for ever.

If we let the stray children alone, if we say, We will not be the keepers of them, Satan will not let them alone, he will keep them; the emissaries of socialism, and infidelity, and superstition will not let them alone, they will look after them; the gaol will not let them alone, it will hold them. And what, I ask, is more awful than to see some dozen children, seven or ten years of age, brought into a police court, be-

cause they have done what they scarcely had an idea of being wrong ; because they have picked a pocket, which they thought just as natural as to eat a dinner ? And because they have done this, they are seized and sent to Bridewell ; and what is the result ? They are lost ; none will take them into the shop as apprentices, or into our houses as servants ; they are indelibly branded. Can you wonder that they grow up more confirmed and desperate criminals ? Now, if that child, instead of being left to pursue the habits of the wicked men by whom it is surrounded, had been admitted among the children of day and Sunday schools, so far from growing up a burden on our taxes, a curse to our country, and miserable, oh deeply miserable to itself, would have grown up a blessing, a benefactor, an ornament in the land to which it belongs.

It may be, that some past word one of us has spoken is at this moment reverberating in some dark lane of London. Some evil deed which you have done may at this moment be casting its baleful shadow over some home, or family, or neighbourhood, or parish. Something that you have said, or patronized, or the course you have pursued, may be leaving disastrous, poisonous,

soul-destroying effects in some place that memory may forget, but that conscience will one day feel. Then, you are verily guilty concerning your brother; you are guilty, not of neglecting him, but in that you have poisoned him. You ask, what is to be done? The word cannot be unspoken, the deed cannot be undone, the shadow cannot be recalled; but you may redeem the time, you may repent of the sin, you may make the reparation that you can, inadequate as it must be, by labouring to counteract the evil you have left, by the good, the beneficence, and the truth that you now apply through that instrumentality which is nearest, readiest, and most effective for the purpose. Where then is thy brother? may suggest recollections of the past as well as duties for the present.

In looking at this solemn subject immediately before us, one of the first feelings that we ought to entertain on a retrospect of what we have done, and what we have left undone, is that of true and genuine repentance. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," is the language that becomes us all.

And, in the next place, the way to show that genuine repentance is to commit ourselves to

every beneficent effort to spread the truth that elevates, the religion that reclaims, the principles that save. Suppose we do not yet see from the schools we aid, or the missions we support, a single good result, this would be no reason for our withdrawing our support. We are very prone to judge of duty by visible effects. I do not believe that either sudden conversion or sudden good is always the most substantial and enduring. God's great law is, "One soweth and another reapeth." I am not responsible for the soil; God alone can change it. I am not responsible for the harvest; God will take care of it. All that I am responsible for is sowing the seed. Man's is the terrestrial labour, God's promise is the celestial blessing. Let each do his duty, and leave God to crown that duty with success. And is not this illustrated in our own experience? We are reaping at this moment blessings that our forefathers have sown. Their labours had no instant success. Pentecost itself, when so many thousands were converted in one day,—so glorious in our recollections,—was not the harvest of the seed that Peter sowed that day. Our common impression, when we read the Acts, is, that Peter's

sermon was so blessed that it produced a Pentecost. I believe that Peter's sermon merely brought to a focus lights that were already struggling and scattered in the minds of his hearers; and that Pentecost was the result of all that Jesus did, and taught, and said, as well as what the apostles preached; in short, that Peter only struck the last blow, which was the crowning one. The Reformation itself of the sixteenth century was not the creation of Martin Luther. He sowed; but I have no doubt that he also reaped what had been sown by reformers long before him. And when we hear of sudden conversions attributed to one sermon, we may depend upon it, it was not the result of that single sermon: the seed had been sown by the dead, by those that have gone to their rest,—sown ten, twenty years before; and then, that last sermon put everything in that light which God blessed, and made the crowning and the triumphant one. So, we must be satisfied to sow blessings that others shall reap. And no one can calculate the practical results of sowing in the infant mind the seeds of a Christian and a thorough education. The seeds will grow up in after-years, when the early lesson-book, and

the first school, are utterly forgotten. We believe that the great hope under God for the regeneration of society, as far as it can be regenerated in the present dispensation, is less in the preaching of the pulpit, and more in the teaching of the school. The preacher finds men all hard, sharp, defined; but the teacher finds children ductile, easily impressed, to whom he may give a tone, a direction, and an impulse, which time will not easily alter. Our ministers teach lessons that may be soon forgotten; but our teachers train the young,—and that training will give a bias, a habit, an inclination, not soon let go. But the question is not, whether our children, or the children in the streets, shall be trained; for it will very soon be seen that if they are not trained in our schools, they are being trained on the streets; if they are not trained by our teachers, they are by pick-pockets and thieves; if they are not being trained in the Bible, they will be in the sharpest methods of transferring other people's property to their own credit or behalf. And therefore, it is not a question whether they shall be trained; the question is, whether they shall be trained aright, or wrong. How they

have been trained will soon make itself apparent by the channels in which their future life will run. Those channels will contain either the fruitful river, with the green verdure and the fragrant blossom on its banks, or the devastating torrents in the barren gully, that destroy and tear down everything. And who knows, but from the coming wrecks of nations there may be reflected our sins? Never let us forget that the crimes of 1853 may be the rebound of our neglect in 1852. We are linked to future generations; we are responsible for those generations in the sight of God. It is true, where we do not see very grand results, we are very apt to misjudge. How magnificent was the Crystal Palace! how grand were the productions of Austria! how delicate were the fabrics of France! how manly and massive were the creations of our father-land! and we said, What a wonderful thing was that fairy palace! Angels on their wings, as they proceed on their errands of mercy, may have swept past the fairy palace in Hyde Park, as a very poor and paltry thing; and may have given their attention to the seven or eight hundred children connected with some school, and there have seen a moral spectacle of beauty

and of grandeur, which no genius or gifted mind can create. We too have diamonds to show in our ragged schools,—rough, I admit, some of them very rough; but capable of exquisite polish, and meant yet, through the blessing of God, to hold places in the diadem of the King of kings, when the Koh-i-noor, the most magnificent diamond of the Crystal Palace, shall be ground to powder, and swept away amid the debris of the things of the earth. Let us then see in a work a magnificence lasting in proportion as it is moral. The builder builds for a century; we, for eternity. The painter paints for a generation; we, for ever. The poet sings for an age; we, for ever. The statuary cuts out the marble that soon perishes; let us try to cut out the likeness of Christ to endure for ever and ever. A hundred thousand men were employed in Egypt to construct a pyramidal tomb for a dead king; let us feel that we are engaged in a far nobler work in constructing temples for the living God. In my humble judgment, the poorest parish school in our native land, with no other ornaments than the dew-drops of the morning to gild it, and the sun-beams to shine upon it, is a nobler spectacle than the loftiest

European cathedral, with its spires glistening in the setting and the rising suns of a thousand years. We estimate the magnificence of a thing not by its exterior beauty, which is evanescent, but by its inner contents, and its ultimate moral effects, which endure for ever and for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROTO-MARTYR.

“ Flung to the heedless winds,
Or on the waters cast,
Their ashes shall be watched,
And gathered at the last.

“ And from that scattered dust,
Around us and abroad
Shall spring a plenteous seed
Of witnesses for God.

“ Still, still though dead they speak,
And trumpet-tongued proclaim,
To many a wakening land,
The one availing name.”

“ By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts : and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”—HEB. xi. 4.

It is remarkable that, after the Fall, Adam passes away. His name ceases to be mentioned, his biography is no more told ; nor, except in connexion with great truths, and the mode of the sinner's acceptance by the second Adam, is he referred to at all.

We trace what Adam was by his image, too faithfully developed in his progeny ; among them it is reflected even in its most terrible pro-

portions and shape. The first evidence of Adam's sin after the Fall was the quarrel of two brothers. Its first direct fruit was murder, "Cain rose up, and slew his brother Abel." So that we see sin after the Fall—sin and death—redemption and life. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" was literally fulfilled; "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head" was no less strictly illustrated in the faith, the confidence, the meekness, the martyrdom of righteous Abel.

Both brothers recognised the duties and the obligations of Christian worship. Their trades are specified in relation to the outward world; their practices are also here recorded with respect to religion. How were they taught the truths of religion? How did Abel know there was a God? How did Cain follow out and exercise his convictions in worshipping a God? There was no written revelation, no Bible, to which they could appeal. The only way in which they were taught was in that first school,—which is after all the best,—the fireside; and under those first teachers,—after all, the most affectionate,—Christian and righteous parents. There they learned that there was a God; that

their first duties consisted in adoration of him, and in loyalty and allegiance to him. Even Cain, though he had no soul filled with the fear of God, had been so drilled and habituated to the outward practice, that when his heart apostatized from God, his hand still persisted in presenting an offering to God,—so important is early habit. The first impression made upon a child often gives tone to his whole after-life. The least seed sown in infancy grows up and bears its fruit in grey hairs and in old age. Habit, even man has remarked in his aphorisms, is a second nature; and when that habit is in a right direction, and endowed and blessed of God, there is nothing so lasting, no power so beneficial.

God accepted the offering of Abel, and did not accept the offering of Cain. We learn here, at least, that all religion, however outwardly and apparently good, is not equally acceptable with God. Both these brothers recognised a God. Both recognised and practised the duty of worshipping that God. Both of them were—as the world would say, looking at the outward aspect—religious men; and yet, there was a vast difference where men saw none,

and God's acceptance of the one, and his rejection of the other, showed that that difference was a vital one. It is not true, that if a man worship God, it matters not whether he be Mahometan, or Romanist, or Protestant, or Socinian. There is an inner difference that God sees, when man can see no outer one. Cain brought his offering first, and showed the greatest zeal, as far as we can judge; and yet, Abel's was an accepted offering, and Cain's a rejected offering. What we believe is as important as what we do; for a wrong faith leads God to reject the possessor of it. A true faith alone is able to offer an acceptable sacrifice unto God.

The church of Christ was in the beginning just what it is now, and will be to the end, till the great Lord of it come, and put all right—a mixed church. Here is the first church. Cain and Abel had no magnificent cathedrals to meet in. They had no beautiful architectural church. They had no outward conventional, established ceremony, or rite, or liturgy, or psalm, or hymn. There were none of these things; and yet there was a church; there was true worship, and false worship; there was the first congrega-

tion of professors and believers of the gospel of Christ. What the church was then, it has been, and will be to the end. This succession has never lost a link—the succession of Cain, and the succession of Abel. Then the tares grew in the same field with the wheat; the bad fish in the same net with the good; the sheep and the goats will browse together, till the great Shepherd come, and put the one upon his right, and the other upon his left. Yet, if we refuse to join a church till we find a pure one, we shall have to wait till the millennium. It is not to be in this dispensation. The great Master speaks to many a hot zealot in such tender and glorious words as these: “Do not go in your zeal to pull up the tares, lest in pulling them up, you pull up the wheat also: let both grow together till the Lord of the harvest come.” It is each man’s duty to see that his heart is right with God: he should be anxious to know what is in him, not what is around him, to have more introspection into his own conscience, to see if that be right in his own sight, rather than to have a cautious, critical investigation to see whether A is what he should be, or whether B is what he professes. The church of Jesus Christ, we are

told, is a mixed body, and it will continue to be so till One, having the authority, make the separation.

The place of worship is nothing, the worshippers are all. Our Lord has most truly defined it, "Wherever two or three are met in my name"—and Cain and Abel met in Christ's name, they were professed followers, one a true, and the other not a true, follower of Christ—"Wheresoever two or three meet in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Now this is the root of a Christian church. All beyond this is development for convenience, for order, for decency, for use; but the first Christian church—the normal idea of a Christian church—is, "Where two or three are met in my name." The architect builds the house; but unless the queen consent to dwell in it, it is not a palace. The builder raises the cathedral; but unless the Lord of glory come down and consecrate it, it is no church. It is not dead stones, nor is it carved rafters, nor yet exquisite imagery, that makes a church; but it is a company of men who fear and love the Saviour, meet in his name, rely on his intercession, and seek his blessing. In such a case, whether

it meet in a barn, in a dungeon, in the catacombs of Rome, on the hill-side, on the highway—there is a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The visible church appeared thus early. The Christian church is not the creation of Martin Luther, of Paul, of Isaiah, or of Abraham; it began the instant sin and grace were introduced in the world. Its external names have varied, but the thing has been the same. There are throughout the world those, who are called Greeks, and Romans, and Jews, others who are called Christians, and Protestants; but there is man running through all—the great aboriginal thing that is in all, that cannot be separated from any. So we have the Christian church, the Patriarchal church, the Jewish church, the Protestant church; but it is the same church with different names, and different phases, presenting different aspects. We have the Red Sea, the Black Sea, the White Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the German Ocean, the Atlantic; but it is the same sea in its different relations locking and interlocking with the dry land. It was the church of Christ when Abel was its minister, its true son, and its martyr. The Christian church now has different forms and aspects; but it is

the same church, because the same substantial creed, the same Saviour, the same Lord, and the same hope.

We look next at the respective sacrifices. Why was Cain's rejected? Why was Abel's accepted? I answer, Cain's was rejected because he had not faith. But does God reject a man and his soul because he has not a form of belief? We answer, Yes: he did not believe in things unseen, or things hoped for; Cain did not believe in a Saviour, because he did not believe that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head—the great promise that God made amid the wrecks of Paradise, and that gilded its decay with an aureole of unearthly glory. "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head," meant, There is a coming Saviour. Now Abel had faith in this; Cain had no faith in this; and if no belief in Christ, then no belief or faith in sin, nor in the depth, and dye, and wickedness of sin. In fact, Cain, to use a modern expression, ignored the Fall. He rejected the fact as a thing that had not been; or, as many people do now regard the advent of the Saviour, as a truth like that of Alexander the Great, an historical person with whom they have no con-

nexion. He looked upon the world as if the Fall had never been, as if ruin had never smitten its heart, as if all things were, in his day, precisely as they stood when Adam and Eve walked in Paradise, and responded to the voice of their Father, whose footsteps they heard at morning and at eventide. We not only gather that one offered by faith an acceptable sacrifice, and the other, through want of faith, a rejected sacrifice ; but we infer this from the very nature of their offerings. Cain took of the fruits and flowers of the ground and offered them unto God. I have no doubt that this was one of Adam's and Eve's offerings before they fell ; and Cain continued the same practice, rejecting the fact of a great disruption, treating it as if it had never been ; and therefore, when Cain was about to offer to God, he walked forth at the sun-rising, and gathered flowers, not yet so blasted as ours are, because sin had not then made such inroads into creation as it has since made. He gathered the most beautiful flowers that still grew beneath the cherubim that guarded the gates of Eden from access. He wove these flowers into a garland ; he laid that garland upon the altar of God, and he stood before

Him, and said, " O God, thy smiles gave to these flowers their exquisite tints. Thy breath, O God, gave to these roses this delicious fragrance. Thy fingers and thy great wisdom shaped every petal, and trimmed it as exquisitely as if thy wisdom had nothing else to do. And I take these flowers, Great Creator, Great Preserver, and I lay them upon thy altar, as an offering expressive of my belief in thee as the Creator of all, and of my trust in thee as the Preserver of all. Amen." The offering was rejected, and the offerer too.

Abel, whose trade was a shepherd, did not take what Cain took, nor did he join in Cain's offering. Abel was a Protestant, protesting against the service of Cain, because a wrong one. And, therefore, Abel, when he offered to God, separated the firstlings of his flock. He took, in other words, the most beautiful and the most healthy and the most unblemished lamb of his flock,—and what did he do? What human nature, at the first blush, would have recoiled from. He plunged his knife into that innocent creature's throat, he laid it a victim on the altar, and he said, " O God, my Father, with my brother Cain, I, too, own thee as my Creator, and as

my Preserver; but I go further than my brother Cain. I have sinned. O Father, sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, and I slay this lamb in token of my belief that I, too, deserve to die; and I offer this my lamb to thee in token of, and to prefigure, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And I look to thee, O God, to take away that sin which must otherwise sink me for ever, by that blood which must be shed in the fulness of time, without the shedding of which there is no remission, and by the cleansing efficacy of which I may be presented before thee without spot or blemish, or any such thing." God accepted Abel's offering, and the offerer too. Now, if we had no Bible to guide us, we should say, Cain offered the most beautiful and acceptable offering, and he ought to have been accepted; and if ignorant of the Bible, we should say, How is it possible that God could accept the painful destruction of an innocent and inoffensive lamb? The answer is, Cain's offering showed, if we had not the record of the text, that he had no faith in the Fall, or in the entrance of sin, or in the promise of a Saviour, or in cleansing through his blood. And Abel's offering evinced that he had faith, or be-

lieved in death by sin, and accepted by faith that Saviour slain from the foundation of the world, by whose blood, Abel, the first martyr, and the very last in the history of our world, must be equally cleansed and accepted by God.

We discover, in this one fact, the origin of animal sacrifices. We see that man, left to his own suggestions, would not likely have thought that a good God could approve of the slaughter, the painful slaughter, of an inoffensive animal ; that it must therefore have been taught him by God, or he never would have practised it. I hold, therefore, that, in heathen countries, where animal sacrifices are found, we have not the invention of man, but traditional usages, borrowed from the rubric of an original or God-taught age. That it was so,—that they were taught by God to offer these sacrifices, is plain from this one fact,—Adam and Eve were clothed, we are told, with the skins of animals. For what purpose did they slay these animals? They did not eat flesh till after the Deluge; and therefore the inevitable inference is, that these animals were killed for sacrifices; and that the first pair were clothed with their skins, as prefigurative of the necessity of their being clothed with the spotless robe of

the lamb, slain in the fulness of time. If we investigate the Levitical economy, we shall find there, that the offering of lambs, and goats, and bullocks, was the every-day duty of the priests of God; that it was a divine appointment, and therefore not the invention of man, but the inspiration of his Maker. God had no more pleasure in the slaughter of a lamb than in the gathering of flowers—one would suppose less. Evidently therefore these victims were appointed to be slain, not for God's sake, but for man's sake; man needed to have it riveted in his very soul, imprinted deeply on his heart, by seeing constantly the awful fact, that without shedding of blood there was no remission of sins; and that, until the Lamb should come, in the fulness of time, in whose blood there would be redemption, it would be his duty to carry on these prefigurative services.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted, because of his belief in these great truths; Cain's sacrifice was not accepted, because of his disbelief in them. In other words, Cain's belief was, that the social disturbances, the agonies of nature, and the world waiting to be delivered, were just as they should be—the normal state of creation, and as

God meant it to be. In a word, his thoughts were those of some modern sceptics, only they have expressed them with much greater eloquence, that "all things are in a state of perfect optimism;" that they were never better, and never can be; whereas, Abel's belief was, that God made all things holy and happy, peace within man's conscience, and harmony without in man's world; but that sin had entered, and death by sin, and disturbed the world; while he expected a deliverer to come, who should retrieve creation from its ruin, and reinstate man in his primitive relations to God. The one had that faith which believed God's word; the other had that faithlessness which believed his own illogical reasoning, and its crude inferences.

We see from all this, that the first thing to be accepted is the offerer; the next thing, is the offering. It is not true that Abel was accepted because of his offering, or that Cain was rejected because of his. The one was first accepted, and therefore he presented an acceptable offering: the other was first rejected, and therefore he presented a rejected sacrifice. The first was accepted because he was a believer in Christ, and his offering was the evidence of it.

The second was rejected because he was a disbeliever in Christ, and the offering that he presented was an evidence that he was such. Their offerings were the evidences of their respective personal states; God accepted the one, and rejected the other, because of those who presented them.

We learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "Abel obtained witness that he was righteous," God thus testified that he was righteous. Our blessed Lord, speaking of Abel in the Gospel of Matthew, speaks of "the blood of righteous Abel;" and the evangelist John, speaking of Abel in his Epistle, speaks of Cain slaying Abel,—“And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.” Now in what respect was Abel accounted righteous, “By it he received the testimony that he was righteous,” yet a righteousness that was not his own, but a righteousness that was imputed to him. This was the great standing doctrine of the Church before the Flood, this it was also that Martin Luther taught at the dawn of Protestantism, that we are counted righteous only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and offered to us. The great sa-

crifice that Abel's offering foreshadowed is this, that he that knew no sin was made sin for us, by having our sins laid upon his head, that we who are sinners might be made righteous in him, by having his righteousness laid upon us. Jesus Christ in our place bore our sins, and delivered us from the curse of a broken law. In our place he obeyed the law, and entitled us to all the blessings and the results of an obeyed law. What we deserved as sinners, Christ has suffered for us. What we owed as creatures, Christ has done for us. And therefore salvation is, in its initial step, in its vital nature,—not doing something to be saved, not suffering something to be forgiven,—but receiving, by faith, the perfect righteousness of Him whose righteousness is for all and upon all that believe; for there is no difference. It is most important that we should hold fast, and clearly and sharply define, this great truth, that our only title to heaven, the only ground on which we are admitted into heaven, is the finished work of the Son of God. And if we feel, in all its glory, that we are complete in Christ, that we have a complete title, that there is no flaw, defect, or deficiency in it, nothing needing to be added to

it, nothing to be done with it, but simply to apply it,—if we hold this fast, we shall never be tempted to add rites or ceremonies in order to be more easily justified; or to think that our sorrows, our tears, our sacrifices, our charities will contribute one jot to our acceptance with God. Good works follow and are the evidences of this state of acceptance; but this state of acceptance is the first thing; and so wherever we are truly and really justified by trust and faith in the finished work of the Saviour, it is just as impossible that good works can fail to follow, as it is that heat can fail to emanate from the kindled fire, or sun-beams to flow from the risen sun. Whatever good, then, Abel had done, he regarded as no part of the righteousness by which he was justified; and whatever pain Abel had suffered, he regarded as no part of that atonement which was to be made for sin. He was counted righteous before he was made righteous. In other words, he was justified by Christ's righteousness without him, before he was sanctified by the Holy Spirit within him. It is thus that we, like Abel, must be justified. Justification by faith, which Martin Luther preached, and preached so clearly, so

constantly, so emphatically, was not a new doctrine. It was only the excavation of an old doctrine that was buried. It was not the creation of a new star ; it was merely the clearing of the clouds from the bright star that had been standing over-head from the days of righteous Abel. It was not something that man had never seen or known before ; it was only the exhibition of that which man's superstition had clouded. When men talk of a new church being made at the Reformation, they talk in perfect ignorance. The Council of Trent made an attempt in 1560 to reform the church. They were specially summoned, cardinals and archbishops and bishops, to reform the church in its head and its members. The Council of Trent met to reform the church ; and Martin Luther, Zwingle, and Knox, and Latimer, and Ridley, all set about to do what the Council of Trent had set them a precedent of—reforming the church. Both parties met to reform it ; but the result was, that the Council of Trent deformed it, and Calvin and Luther reformed it. In the first case, you have the church made worse than it was already. In the other case, you have all the errors and incrustations of the

church cast away from it. The Reformation is not older than the sixteenth century; Christianity is as old as the days of Abel. The reformation of the church, the exhibition of the church in its apostolic purity, was the object and attainment of the Reformers. It is of no use to say that Luther was passionate, and that Cranmer once went back again to the superstitions from which he had emerged. It is of no use to plead that our Reformers had many great faults. The wonder is, that, coming out of so bad a school as that of Romanism, these men had not more faults. The splendid heritage vindicated and transmitted by their toils was not because they had no faults, but in spite of their having faults. We therefore conclude, that this great truth, which is the glory of the church of Christ, around which its brightest hopes collect and rally, and on which the superstructure of its happiness must be built—justification by faith alone in the righteousness of Jesus Christ—was an ancient doctrine, a primitive dogma, the hope of Abel, and the joy of all the members of the Church before the Flood.

God accepted the one, and rejected the other; but what was the result of his doing so?

Abel's meekness, charity, forbearance, submission, and love, and gratitude, were all increased by God's acceptance of his offering ; but Cain's hatred, malice, ill-will, and all uncharitableness, were inflamed and exasperated by the rejection of his, especially as contrasted with the visible acceptance of his brother's offering. Thus it comes to pass, that the very virtues of the good are their worst faults, their greatest crimes, in the eyes of the wicked. Thus the excellence of one that is hated, is the very fuel that feeds the jealousy of him that hates him. We never can, by any progress in excellence, allay the envy or the jealousy of the depraved. The only way is to pray that a new heart may be given them, that thus they may rejoice at the spectacle that they now reprobate, reject, and condemn.

We see here the very first proofs of sin and grace. Sin developed itself in its first stage in murder. Grace developed itself in its first manifestation in martyrdom. In the one, you have sin making the awful murderer. In the other, you have grace ripening the soul for the heroism of a doomed martyrdom. The Lord showed, at the very commencement of the church and the world, what sin can make man, if unmitigated

and unrestrained; and how grace can elevate and ennoble him who accepts it in his heart. This succession is still continued. What is the great brand and mark of the Western Apostacy? The Cain mark. It came to pass, that wherever Cain trod, the soil was cursed because of him; and that wherever man saw him, he was ready to destroy him. His presence was a curse. And what is the history of that great Apostacy? Read its history in the fires it has kindled for the destruction of its victims. Trace its havoc among the martyrs of Jesus to the days of the Reformation. Trace its footsteps in the blood that was shed; and if we wish to know what its moral results are, where it has dominion, let us turn to Spain, and Italy, and Austria, where we have a people above the soil not one whit more intellectual than the dead dust of their fathers sleeping beneath the soil. And yet we are told that this is the system which is to be such a blessing to Westminster; which is to achieve the regeneration of the benighted Irish there. A recent visitor has said, he could trace a nobleman, distinguished for his philanthropy and goodness, in the dark places of Westminster. He found him wading through the

mud, after speaking to the ragged children some bright hopes and useful lessons, to visit some plague-smitten alley. But during the whole time, he had not met His Eminence, the individual who has promised so much, in a single poor dormitory, or ragged school, or distributing even by substitute a single tract or Bible among them. Be not deceived ; what Romanism has made Spain, Italy, and Austria, morally and intellectually, it would make Westminster. The Cain mark is upon it. It has its origin then and there. I am not speaking of men ; for Christians are in it ; but these are not its creation, they are produced in spite of it.

Two or three more lessons I gather from the whole of this interesting subject.

First, on looking back to the history of these two brothers, we find that Cain was the elder and that Abel was the younger ; and that when Cain was born, Eve said, “ I have gotten a man from the Lord ;” or, in the original it is, “ I have gotten the man, Jehovah.” In other words, she heard, sounding in her heart, that beautiful promise, “ The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” She thought that the seed was to be born of her, instead of 4000 years

afterwards. And when Cain was born, in the exuberance of her joy that a man-child was born, she said, "I have gotten the man promised to bruise this wicked serpent's head. I have got him." And she called him, therefore, Cain, which means, "one that is acquired." And when Abel was born, she called him Abel, which means "Vanity," that is, "Poor child, he belongs to a fallen race; he is scarcely worth the trouble of rearing." She was bitterly mistaken. She lived to see her miscalculations. Names often are misapplied. Mothers' hopes are often blighted and blasted. The son that she thought would be her glory and her defence, turns out the murderer. The other that she christened Vanity, and thought unworthy of notice, turns out to be the martyr.

Grace is not by nature. Adam was a converted man, a true Christian, as soon as he received the promise, and believed in Jesus. But Adam had in his family two sons, one a Christian—Abel; the other not a Christian—Cain. And what does this teach us? Sin is native; but grace is donative. Sin is by generation; grace is by regeneration. The pious father has not always the pious son. The wicked

parent has not always the wicked child. God shows sovereignty in these things, and yet he has given a promise in connexion and not inconsistent with that sovereignty, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Outward events are not necessarily the evidences of God's mind towards us. The very first Christian was put to a cruel death; and the very first murderer escaped alive. What does this exhibit? That God's outward providential acts are not always, in themselves, and of themselves, the exact evidences of his love and affection towards us. God's hand is often heavy on a Christian, when God's heart overflows with love to that Christian. We must not, therefore, because we lose our property, our health, or our relations, if we be believers, say, All these things are against us. But, if we be God's children, we must feel, and we are warranted, and commanded, and it is our privilege to feel, that "all things are working together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

One remark more. It has been argued, that because Cain was spared and not capitally punished

on this occasion, that, therefore, capital punishment is forbidden of God. It seems to prove the reverse to me. Cain apparently knew that death was his desert—such was his consciousness of the inner law already felt, if not written, upon the human heart, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed,” that he said, “Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.” Why did Cain say so? Because the very instincts of his conscience told him that capital punishment was the desert of so capital a crime. But God spared him. He let him go away for some special purpose, probably for man’s sake, not his own, to make proof by experiment whether the remission of capital punishment would be better than inflicting it. God always teaches a lesson by a fact, before he states a principle. He spared Cain, but what was the result? Two thousand years after, he looked down, and saw that the whole earth was filled with violence and bloodshed. Then what did God say? He made a new law, not new in its

principle, for it was in Cain's heart; but new as a legislative enactment, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed;" that is, the sparing the murderer has not been productive of the results that certain warm and kind-hearted men still predict; but of the very reverse. And, therefore, capital punishment for that crime, and it is the only crime that ought to be capitally punished, is an awful, a stern, and terrible necessity; a necessity that has a sanction in the Bible, and, I suspect, in the hearts and consciences and judgments of the most enlightened legislators among mankind.

Wherever there exist self-righteousness and a persecuting spirit, there is nothing like a missionary spirit. When God inquired of Cain about his brother, his contemptuous reply was, "Am I my brother's keeper?" precisely as many people say still, not so wicked as Cain, but quite as thoughtless, "A man's salvation is his own business, his salvation is his own matter." So one says; but another says with truth, "It is your duty, and your privilege." And it is not only so in principle; but it is so in experience. If you let the rising generation of the poor grow

up without teaching them, from the Scriptures, their duties to God, and their duties to their souls, the next generation will tell you, that if you had been your brother's keeper, you would not now have been your brother's victim. The best interest of society, as well as the first duty of the gospel, is to try to make every man better because we have come into contact with him. There is not a servant in our house, there is not a labourer on our estate, there is not a person to whom we do not owe the duty, of trying to make him better and happier; so that the world may say, as they hear of our death, or see our tombstone, Here lies one, who lived not to amass money, nor one who selfishly pursued his way, shouldering off every man who would not bring money to him; but a Christian, who has passed through the world—not a blank, nor a bane—but a great and an increasing blessing; who has made the world better because he was in it. To have such a posthumous renown, is far nobler than to have poems written on a tombstone, or beautiful comments paid for or advertised in the papers of the day. Let us show that we have no sym-

pathy with the Cain-cry, "I am not my brother's keeper," but with Christ's feeling, who laid down his life for his brethren.

And, lastly, let us ask ourselves, are we, by faith, resting upon Abel's Saviour? Are we resting, in our hearts, on that only righteousness which is unto and upon all? When Cain—and what a fact is this—was overwhelmed with envy at the acceptance of his brother's sacrifice, God said, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door:" that is, "Obey perfectly, and the reward shall be perfect acceptance." "And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door," or, as it might otherwise be justly translated, a "sin-offering" lies at your door.

"A sin-offering lieth at thy door." In other words, "If, Cain, you are satisfied that by deeds of the law you can be justified, pray make the trial, and be justified or not according to the issue; but, if you are satisfied, by painful and bitter conviction, that by deeds of the law you never can be justified, then rush from Sinai; rivet your affections on this only Saviour; look to the great Sin-offering; make him once for all

your only trust. It is not for you to go up to heaven to bring Christ down ; nor is it for you to go down into the depths to bring Christ up. He waits for your acceptance. He was pierced for you. That Victim speaks in his agony, and he speaks from the throne, ‘ Behold, I stand at the door, and knock : if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’ ” And if mercy and forgiveness, through the blood of Christ, were offered to such a sinner as Cain, let the chiefest of saints and the greatest of criminals know that there is instant forgiveness for their greatest sins, if, with humble trust and faith and confidence, they look to and lean on Him who is set forth as the propitiation for their sins.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HEART AS IT IS.

“ All our actions take
Their lines from one complexion of the heart,
As landscapes, their variety from light.”

“ I care not, so my kernel relish well,
How slender be the substance of my shell.
My heart being holy, let my face be wan ;
I *am* to God, I only *seem* to man.”

“ The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked : who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins.”—JER. xvii. 9, 10.

“ And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”—GEN. vi. 5, 11, 12.

It needs not any additional remarks of mine, to enforce the truth I have endeavoured, however feebly, to show, that a vast deterioration has taken place in all humanity. Its progression, during the series of 1500 years that had elapsed from the creation of man, was in every instance towards worse, in no instance a retrogression towards the good that it had lost. Every faculty seems to have been injured, every

affection to have become depraved, and the whole heart of man, in the expressive and almost awful language of the prophet, to have become "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

We are not left to draw this conclusion as an inference; it is the positive assertion of God, reiterated in almost every book of the Bible, and painfully confirmed by all the facts of the history of mankind. He who made the heart and knew it, and He who could search it and sift it, and see through all its wrappings, and detect it under all its multiplied disguises, pronounces of it the awful verdict in the 6th chapter of Genesis, that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." "And it repented the Lord, and grieved him to the heart, that he had made man." What an expression of the awful depravity of man! and how bad must he have been, when the God who made him once so beautiful and fair, is said, in the language of earth, to have repented, and to have been grieved at the heart, that he had made him. But we have only to read modern history, and on the Continent from 1789 to 1853, to hear

of the frightful excesses into which humanity, when let loose from the restraint of moral law, can plunge and precipitate itself.

The language that God uses in Genesis is most strong—"every imagination," every movement of the heart—"every imagination of the thoughts," that is, that delicate tracery of thought which man cannot handle, and which man's blind eye cannot see, God sees, and pronounces to be tainted. "And every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart," not merely one, or a few, but "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart" is evil, infected,—the fountain is polluted, the root is poisoned; all the streams and all the fruit and branches must be so. And there is no suspension of this evil; for he says, it is evil, and that "continually." What an awful statement is this, that the thoughts that we think pure, seen by God, are really impure; and that our best doings have so much alloy in them, that they alone would disqualify us for the kingdom of heaven. Our moral sense, just like our physical sense, has become deadened by the Fall; but I have no doubt that to the eye of an infinitely pure Being, even the purest thought that leaps like the lightning through the heart

of man, must present itself as infected, or poisoned, in his sight. "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually." Let us read the history of the race in after ages, and do we find any change? We come down to the days of the prophet Jeremiah, from whom I have read the passage that we are now considering, and in his days, 595 years before the birth of Christ, that is, about 3500 years after the creation of man, and about 1500 years after God's judgment in the verse in Genesis—we find man's heart pronounced to be "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—the disease is too desperate to be cured. The words "desperately wicked" mean incurable; and Gesenius, the celebrated Hebrew lexicographer, who was a rationalist, defines the word to mean "so desperate as to be incurable by human power." In other words, the disease is too deep to be cured by human skill. There may be in man's heart modifying lights, relieving contrasts; there may be fragments of his primeval beauty still surviving; there may be thoughts that indicate the grand fountain out of which they came in Paradise, still lingering; but the great judgment is true of all humanity,

that it is far worse than we know it, and our disease far more perilous than we ourselves admit or believe. It is "desperately wicked; who can know it?" Not ourselves, for the *terra incognita* to thousands is in their own bosoms, and men who know the secrets of chemistry, geology, astronomy, are ignorant of the secret depths and recesses of their own hearts. "Who can know it?" Not demons, not angels, not metaphysicians, not anatomists. God says, that there is a depth of depravity in it so great, that none can know it, and "I the Lord that search the hearts, and try the reins of the children of men, alone can know it."

Did this heart mend itself when we come to the days of our blessed Lord? You are aware, it is a favourite theory with certain philosophers, that if you leave humanity, it will grow into perfection just as sure as if you leave a seed, it will grow into a tree, and blossom, and bear fruit; and that man is in a course of endless progression toward perfection. Is it fact, that now humanity is improved in its moral features? Separate from it the influence of the Christian religion, and is it not true that nations ignorant of Christianity are at this moment just what we

are? Alas, we can find among the ancient heathen, instances of devotedness, and self-sacrifice, and virtue, such as you will not find in modern nations that are strangers to the restorative power of the gospel of Christ Jesus. Let us look, then, if there was any progress up to the days of our Lord, that is, 2500 years after the time when this judgment in Genesis was pronounced. What does the Lord say? He was "the truth;" his judgment must, therefore, be true. He was love itself, and could, therefore, have no pleasure in darkening the portrait that was already dark enough. He says, "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Such are the children of the heart—such the offspring of your heart, and mine also, as they exist in their native, unchanged, and unrenovated character. He who heard its lowest beatings, said so. He whose eye pierced its most subtle and exquisite structure, said so. He who had no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live, said so. And as if in his own generation he should prove it to

be such, he, the perfection of all excellence, the brightness of the glory of God, came to earth, and if one spark of love, one element of purity, existed in nature, all must have hailed so illustrious, so beneficent a messenger, come from the skies to restore us; but instead of doing so, the awful proof of our awful wickedness is in these words, "He came to his own, and his own knew him not." He came offering his life a ransom for sinners, and they shouted, as the representatives of all humanity, "Away with him, away with him! Crucify him, crucify him! It is not fit that such a one should live."

If, again, we come down to the days of the apostle Paul, we find no progress still. He gives a picture of the human heart, as it existed in his days, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, so awful, that we at once feel that the judgments of God in the 6th chapter of Genesis, and in the 17th chapter of Jeremiah, were not in the least over-charged. I am speaking, not of the heart of the Jew, or the heart of the Roman, but of that of man. The portraits of Christianity are not topical, local, accidental, they are graphic pictures of all mankind—the just and accurate

cartoons of what humanity was, is, and ever must be, till it be renovated by the holy Spirit of God.

Of course, many will say, We cannot believe that the natural man is what you say, since we see so much in him that is the reverse. I admit that one man is constitutionally honourable, another again is constitutionally humble, and honest, and gentle. There are also repressive influences which keep down the outbreak of the heart's corruptions. It must be remembered that this is not a description of what is taking place without, but of what is lurking within. This is not a statement of a volcano exploding; but it is that of a volcano that has its retreat in the heart, and is there ever liable to explode, and demonstrate the fearful elements of havoc that are latent within. The description, therefore, is not that every human being is a drunkard, an adulterer, a blasphemer, covetous, wicked, proud, foolish, a murderer, a thief, and so on; it does not say, every individual is so; but it says, in every individual's heart these elements exist, in some in the bud, in some slightly developed, in some powerful, in some irresistible, and in some exploding in awful manifestations.

It is therefore the picture of what the human heart is, and what it may develope, if circumstances permit it. We do not know how much we owe to never having come within reach of some specific temptation; for how much of our excellence we are indebted to our never being placed in circumstances where the match that would ignite might have been applied. We do not know, in other words, what we owe to the providence of God that placed us here, and not there. And very often, when you rebuke with just severity the offender, temper your rebuke with the inner recollection—I might have been worse, if I had been in his place; and at all events, give for your safety and preservation all the glory, either to the providence of God that kept you as you are, or to the grace of God that made you triumph, where otherwise you would have foully fallen.

Having seen this picture of what humanity has become, let us notice the following lessons. First, long life is no preservative against the degeneracy of man. He lived in the days of Noah twelve or thirteen times longer than he lives now; but did he improve? Did experience teach him more excellent lessons? Did

his contact with evil prove to him experimentally its bitterness? Did he grow better as he grew older? The language of Scripture indicates the very reverse—in fact, the longer he lived the more corrupt he became, and the inference naturally forced upon us is, that it is well that man's life is shortened, or the world would become far worse than it ever was before. The shortening of our life is partly in judgment, but it is mainly in mercy—in mercy to the good, that they may be sooner transplanted to a higher and better world—in mercy to the bad, that they may not have space and scope to develop all the inherent depravity of their nature. Thus therefore, what seems to us a judgment because of our sins, is lightened by the thought that it is also mercy on the part of God. To wish, therefore, that we lived a couple of hundred years, instead of seventy, is scarcely Christian. There is no evidence that we should get better by it. We shall find old men just as depraved in one way, as young men are in another, if both be strangers to the grace of God.

Tradition is no sure preventive of corruption. Here was a grand field for the experiment, whether tradition, or the oral transmission of

truth, would preserve the human race from apostasy. Between Adam and Noah there was only one single link. Methuselah could tell Noah what he learned from Adam, and the lessons that Adam taught; and Noah could thus treasure them up for his generation. If ever oral transmission of truth was placed in circumstances favourable to its perfect efficiency, it was in the antediluvian world. But what was the result? It failed to prevent utter apostasy, or at all to arrest the corruption of all mankind; it failed to perpetuate that truth which Adam had learned in Paradise, but which the antediluvians had forgotten soon after they learned it from Adam's lips. And if oral transmission of truth failed in such favourable circumstances, how inevitable is the conclusion that it cannot have succeeded in the mediæval ages of Europe, and that the traditions of the Western Apostasy, instead of being the truths of God, are the perverted, and corrupted, and distorted traditions of once great truths, now travestied into utter and anile fables.

We learn in the next place, that God's great forbearance did not repress wickedness. How long did God bear with man after man had fallen into this apostate, demoralized, and lost

condition! One would have thought that such forbearance so vividly illustrated in the case of spared Cain, would have made the rest of mankind say, So good a God surely merits a different treatment at our hands. But they denied his existence; they defied his judgments; they doubted the inspection of his providence, and lived as if there were no God, and sinned as if there could be no judgment. The long forbearance of God had, therefore, no arresting influence on the increased corruption of man.

Again, the visible example of the effects of sin had no effect upon them. In other words, punishment did not deter them. Cain walked the world, blasted within and branded without, a vagabond and a fugitive, the punished of heaven and the shunned of earth, proving by his dumb but expressive spectacle, that it is a bitter and a wicked thing to depart from God. They heard, thundering behind Cain, a law that said, "Thou shalt not;" and they heard, speaking from the earth, the blood of Abel that still cried for vengeance; they saw an earth blasted, flowers blighted, and Paradise, like a bright vision, departing in the distant horizon — all reminding what sin was, and what sin had done,

and what terrible punitive retributions awaited it: and yet, with a high hand they sinned against God, and defied the judgments, and mocked at the penalties of the transgression of his holy law. More than this, they had seen one instance at least of a miracle adequate to teach them that the path to heaven was the path of piety and virtue. They had seen Enoch walk with God, and had beheld him ascend in a bright cloud to the presence of God—a testimony visible to the eye, and audible to the ear, that God loved and regarded the righteous, and that his ear was ever open to their cry. But this did not arrest their course; there is no proof that this miracle exercised a regenerating or transforming influence upon antediluvian society. And so will it ever be—“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” No demonstration of power can ever change the human heart; what therefore we need in the present day is, not that God would bow the heavens, and work visible miracles before us, but that He would be pleased to bring on another Pentecost, and pour his Holy Spirit into our dark and corrupt hearts. And it always seems to me that the

demand for miracles to convince us that Christianity is true, is an admission of scepticism and unbelief. The miracles wrought by our Lord and his apostles sufficiently affirm the truth of Christianity. They convince me. I do not wish to linger longer at the porch—I am satisfied that the temple is built by God, and that its inner chambers are filled with the glory of God; and, persuaded of this, I can no longer remain without for proofs of it, I must go within and hear the heavenly oracle, and receive the blessings that are for me, and feed upon the living bread that God has provided for them that love him. It is certain, that no miracle, however vast the power of which it is the exponent, will ever serve to make a man a Christian. Thousands will appear at the judgment-day, and say, “Lord, have we not in thy name done many wonderful works? And he will say unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” This shows us, that wonderful works may be done in Christ’s name by men who are not Christ’s people. And we read in the Scriptures, that there shall come a day when such signs and wonders shall be done, that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. And

we are told, that the "man of sin" will come with "lying wonders"—not "false wonders," but *τέρασι ψεύδους*, "wonders to confirm a lie"—wonders wrought to prove that a lie is God's truth. But, if any such were to be performed before us, if one were to come, and raise a dead man from the grave, and say, "I have done so, and I show you this proof of power to convince you that the Bible is not the word of God, and that you are to hear tradition, and not the Bible;" first of all, I should recollect that there shall come wonders in the last days, such as, if it were possible, shall deceive the very elect; I should then recollect that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; and lastly, I should not hesitate to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou savourest not of the things that be of God." This book ends all controversy about what is truth, and therefore all the miracles that power can exhibit upon earth will not in the least degree shake my confidence in the contents of this book: for if God wrought miracles to prove that it is true, he never can work other miracles to prove that it is false; and therefore all contrary miracles must come from

beneath, they never can come from the source of light and truth.

In the next place, we find in the antediluvian world that the very preaching of the gospel failed to arrest the prevailing degeneracy. Noah was a preacher of righteousness; and in 1 Pet. iii. 18, a passage which has been much misunderstood, we read: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which" Spirit—the "Spirit that shall not always strive with man," (Gen. vi. 3,)—"also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Then, we gather from this that the gospel was preached by Noah, as the ambassador of Christ to the antediluvians; and

that, hearing that gospel thus preached, they were yet not moved, or melted, or transformed by its sanctifying and its efficient power. And the passage says also, that Christ “went and preached unto the spirits in prison.” Who were they? Not the spirits who were in prison in the days of the Flood, as if Christ went down into some fabulous region, and preached to men after they were dead; it means, that Jesus went and preached to those who lived in the days of Noah, but who in the days of Peter were, and in our days are, in prison—that prison being an everlasting exile from the presence and the glory of God. In other words, it tells us that Jesus Christ preached by Noah to men, who so little profited by it, that they are now shut up in the prison of condemnation till the last day. It is also added, “The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us.” Baptism has, then, some connexion with the Flood. Now, how did the Flood save men? It saved Noah and his family, but it did not regenerate them; it was no proof that they had been savingly accepted of God. In spite of that baptism Ham plunged into grievous sin against God. Now baptism in the case of believers, is a seal of recognition of

them as believers ; and, wherever it is administered, whether to young or old, it no more preserves the subject of it from the infection of sin in after life, than the Flood preserved the earth from that corruption which spreads over it in the present day. Thus the gospel was preached to the antediluvians, without any corresponding result equal to the preciousness of those truths which sounded in their ears. Is it not the same still? Men hear the gospel, and they believe it, but they feel nothing of it—the preacher’s voice is as the sound of one who playeth well upon an instrument ; and thousands who hear it are now what they would have been if Christianity had never been preached to them at all. The antediluvians are not singular in their rejection of the gospel ; but wherever that gospel is preached still, it is the “ savour of life ” unto some, and the “ savour of death ” unto others.

We learn, in the next place, that the judgment which Noah proclaimed did not act with any effect upon the vast multitude. He told them that the windows of heaven would be opened, and the fountains of the deep broken up. And to precept he added example ; for the antediluvians saw him, for upwards of one hun-

dred years, laying the timbers of his ark. I have no doubt that some most heartily laughed at him, and if they had newspapers in that day, that they caricatured him for the merriment and the amusement of all. I have no doubt scientific men showed that it was absolutely impossible that there could be a flood; they probably asked, where is the force that can resist the law of gravitation, and make the waters of the sea rise against that law, and cover the loftiest mountains and pinnacles of the world? And thus the whole world settled itself down into the quiet conviction that the earth would last their day at least, and that, if they listened to that fanatical old man, they would only be disturbed in their present enjoyments. Now all their conclusions were very probable and very exact, as far as the data upon which they proceeded were concerned; but they left out one element—they ignored the existence and the word of God, that governs all things—the element of Omnipotent power was excluded—the element of God's threat to do so was disregarded, and therefore all their conclusions fell to the ground. But, if the antediluvians acted thus, let us take care lest we be faithfully copying their example; for we

are actually told in the word of God itself, in the Second Epistle of Peter, in the third chapter, "Beloved, be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Well, then the apostle appeals to the era of the Flood, and he says, "For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept stored with fire, reserved against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward," just as he was in the days

of Noah, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," just as he was then. "But," says Peter, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" All this shows that poor humanity, unimproved by the past, will repeat itself in the future; that the human heart in the nineteenth century, will just be the counterpart of the human heart in the two thousandth year of the world's creation. And do not men go on saying, To-day is, and therefore to-morrow will be? They say 1852 is the guarantee and the pledge of 1853; but it is not so. Because you have seen the end of 1852, you have not the least guarantee that you will see that of 1853; because this year has rolled to its close, there is no evidence that God will continue to us the next. He lives, and is the living God; not the God of the past that was, but of the present that is; and he may step in and terminate the

series at any moment and at any hour, like a thief in the night, as he pleases. And yet, stranger still to say, though this is so, men will be engaged upon the eve of the world's destruction by fire, just as they were on the eve of its dissolution by the Flood. Some one has made the remark, "History is an old almanack." The remark was made contemptuously, but there is great truth in it. The dates are changed, and that is all. Hence it is, that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. The date is changed, but there is the same human nature, the same facts, the same phenomena—human nature, left to itself, having made no progression, but repeating itself till the cycles of to-day are only the repetition of the cycles of yesterday, and both teach us all that, without influence from on high, human nature must degenerate, not improve, or attain to that great standard to which it was originally conformed.

Such are some of the features of church and state prior to the Deluge, and such too are some of the proofs that these portraits are too faithfully copied by us, who live in the last days of the world. How humbling it is to us all, that we

are the descendants of such a race, the inheritors of so perverted a humanity! How forcibly are we taught by all we have been considering, that the domestic is the first spring of powerful influence, either to corrupt, or to improve mankind! It is in the individual home that influences begin, which go forth, like ministering angels, to bless and beautify mankind, or, like fiends and demons, to curse and to destroy the world. It was by intermarriages that God forbade, that the great elements of corruption were so rapidly generated. It is still the individual home that makes the great home, called the country. And all reforms, ecclesiastical, social, political, however good in themselves, are not for one moment to be compared with that reform which begins in the individual heart, fills with its transforming beauty the individual home, and spreads from it, as from a centre of sanctifying and holy influence, till the whole country, or the large home, becomes the reflection of the little one; and nations are blessed, and mankind are benefited, by what individuals are in their personal and domestic relationships.

One great secret of the inveterate corruption of the heart is its deceitfulness. It is said by the

prophet, that it "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now, to be aware of the heart's deceitfulness is as important as to be aware of the heart's depravity. It is its deceitfulness that is the vehicle, as it is always the proof, of its great depravity. And this deceitfulness is seen by its deceiving the judgment in the estimate of the heart. There are few men who do not think their hearts far better than they are. How often we hear men say, Well, he did such a thing, but in the main he has a good heart; as if there could be a good heart with bad fruit. Imagination too, like a hireling poet, sings the praises of the heart; and the judgment, ever listening to a poet so sweet and congenial to itself, also joins in the praises, and pronounces, We are, after all, not so bad as Scripture describes us; nor is our condition so dangerous as the preacher tells us.

How often, too, does the heart deceive us in our attachments in the world! You will say to yourselves, I have no undue attachment for money, I do not think I am covetous; and that is your real feeling. But let your money be swept away, let your property be destroyed, let some great loss overtake you, and fall upon

your possessions like a thunderbolt, scattering and consuming all; and how is it then? You now feel that your heart deceived you when it told you that your attachment to this world's wealth was slight; and by the murmuring and the repining of that heart at its losses, you learn how deep, although how undetected, was your attachment to this world's good things.

The heart deceives us as to our power of resisting evil. You hear the preacher say something against theatres, and you say, I have not the least disposition to be affected by this sin, or by that vice; and therefore, you add, I will go; I am not afraid to go; I am quite conscious that I shall not catch any harm. You see, first, what you do not exactly like. You think this is not so pure as you could have wished; but still, you suppose, it is the custom of the place; and ultimately you come to look upon things with perfect complacency, from which you would have revolted before, and to admire sparkling remarks with double meanings, which once you would have instinctively shrunk from. And thus, the heart deceives you to enter, because you believe it is impregnable; afterwards it tells you how deceitful, as well as how depraved, it

is. There is, we are told, above the thundering cataract Niagara, a broad and a placid stream, so beautiful and smooth, that a boat plied by oars or sails moves upon it as upon a calm lake. You may go lower down, and an oar will still manage the boat; but a little further down there is a point where an oar will fail, and where the voyager and his vessel will be carried irresistibly onwards, and dashed over the impetuous cataract, and both will disappear together. In other words, in all moral evil there is a point where you should resist, and where you may resist successfully; but go beyond that point—play with it—dare, brave it—venture still, and you will be borne into its vortex, and retreat will be impossible. Or, to suppose another case, you go into a gambling-room. To a cautious adviser your answer is, I have no taste for gambling; I do not well know how to play cards; I have not the least temptation to speculate—it is not my taste. You see some one whom you call your friend, who is busily engaged in it. You watch him play, and you find him successful. You cannot see any great harm in shuffling a card, or in throwing a die; and though you have no liking for gambling, and not the least fear that you

would risk anything in it, you think it would be a very great amusement; and therefore, to wile away a few minutes, you sit down at the table; and ere the night is over you rise a desperate or a ruined gambler. Such is the deceitfulness of the human heart; it leads you to believe, first, that it is utterly incapable of this and of that impression: you give way, and you find that most unintentionally you have yielded to that which plunges you in irreparable and deplorable ruin. Sometimes, when you are told of all these things, you are very apt to say, as one said of old (2 Kings viii. 12, 13): "Hazeal," speaking to Elisha, "said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and wilt rip up their women with child. And Hazeal said, But what, is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." And he did all that Elisha said; and yet his first instinctive feelings, suggested by the very deceitfulness of

his heart, were, that such things are utterly impossible.

I do not dwell longer upon this. Let us pray that all of us may possess the great preventive of, and the only antagonist to, the tendencies of a depraved heart, namely, the sure regeneration of the Holy Spirit of God. God alone knows the heart, God alone can change the heart. It is still true, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." A Christian is not the old vine from which one branch has been lopped off, a vessel of which one hole has been stopped up, leaving the element within to work itself out in some other channel; a Christian is one whose whole heart has been changed. In other words, regeneration is not a reformation of man, it is a revolution of man; it is an entire transformation of all the springs, and all the thoughts and fountains, of his being: so that all things have become new, and all old things are passed away.

Make sure of this change: it is reality, not shadow. The subjects of this change will not venture on forbidden ground; they will not tamper with the evil that is seductive and perilous; they will learn to suspect far distant and

even possible evil; and they will ever pray, what will be their safety in proportion as they realize it, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

CHAPTER X.

BAPTISM DOETH SAVE.

“The heir of heaven, henceforth I dread not death ;
In Christ I live, in Christ I draw the breath
Of the true life. Let sea, and earth, and sky,
Wage war against me : on my brow I show
The mighty Master’s seal. In vain they try
To end my life, who can but end its woe.”

“The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”—1 PET. iii. 21.

IT is asserted by Peter, that Jesus preached to the antediluvians previous to the Flood the great truths of the gospel, which he afterwards came to seal and establish by his death. He did so, not immediately, but mediately by the instrumentality of Noah, “a preacher of righteousness,” who preached to and reasoned with those who were threatened destruction by the approaching flood, and pressed them to enter into the ark, and have instant safety. It is said, Jesus did so by his Spirit,—“By which Holy Spirit he went and preached.” Thus we have Christ the Preacher, the Spirit the In-

spirer of the message, and Noah the organ of its utterance, or the minister.

“He preached,” it is said, “to the spirits in prison.” I need not state that some have argued that Christ descended into a region known by the unscriptural name of purgatory, and that there he preached to the inmates their approaching deliverance. But this is confounding things that differ; for here it is stated that Christ merely went and preached to the antediluvians who were on earth in the days of Noah, and while they were on earth, who were in prison in the days of Peter. The historian, Peter, says they were in prison in his days; but the preacher, Noah, preached to them whilst they were yet existing in the flesh in his. These souls were in the flesh when Christ preached to them; these souls were in prison when Peter wrote concerning this fact. And any one who reads history must notice that two things are often predicated of the same party—the one true when the party spoken of was upon earth; the other true when the historian who records the fact wrote or recorded that fact. Now to found the doctrine of purgatory upon this is to misinterpret the passage altogether. Besides, there

is a conclusive reply to any such inference in this, that purgatory, as defined by the Council of Trent, is for the souls of believers, who there, it alleges, are purified, and out of which they emerge to heaven. But those who perished by the Flood were unbelievers, and therefore, by the very definition of the doctrine, they never could have entered purgatory, and from thence emerged to heaven. Whatever doctrine, therefore, this text may support, it is not the doctrine of purgatory as held by the Romish Church. All that is here stated is, that there is a "prison," or a place of eternal woe, which was open in the days of Noah, was not closed in the days of Peter, and there is no record that it is closed now.

But I have selected this passage as a sequel to my explanations of the history of Noah, in order to illustrate the meaning of that misapprehended, mistaken, and perverted thing, or rather sacrament or rite, which we call baptism. For some of the distinctions that I have drawn—distinctions, I think, of paramount importance, I am deeply indebted to a very able letter addressed by that truly great man, the Rev. Dr. Mc Neile, to the Bishop of Exeter. Some of his distinctions I cordially adopt with this acknow-

ledgment, as singularly precious and important at the present moment. It does seem, on looking at this passage, that the great errors that have been grafted upon baptism have arisen from confounding things that utterly and totally differ. There is sprinkling with water, or, if you like, immersion in water—and there is a baptism which is regeneration in the absolute and true sense of that word; but to take the one and put it for the other, is to misapply and pervert the plainest passages of the word of God. The real baptism, strictly so called, is the inner one which the Holy Spirit gives, while the outer rite which the minister bestows, is merely the recognition of that previous inner baptism which the Holy Spirit of God has given.

But in order to show what Scripture says upon this subject, let me refer to the different senses in which the word baptism is used, and let the reader mark and recollect the texts, in order that he may be furnished upon a matter which I hope, by God's blessing, I may make clear, and upon which I hope fewer every day hold the painful heresies and errors of Oxford. Baptism signifies, in the first instance, *suffering*. The first proof I quote for this is in

Luke xii. 49, 50. "I am come," says the Saviour, "to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Now here is the word "baptism" used in no sense in connexion with water at all. My conviction is that the word *bapto*, or rather *baptizo*, or, as we call it in Scotland, *baptidzo*, in its strict sense, has nothing to do with water-dipping, or immersion, but is used in relation to consecration, or devotion, or being set apart. Our Saviour says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with,"—and this was after his baptism by John,—and he was straitened till that baptism should be passed through, thus clearly alluding to the sufferings which he was very soon to undergo. We find the same use of the word in Mark x. 38. "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?"—meaning plainly his cup of suffering—"and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" This is not water baptism in any sense or shape, but simply agony, suffering, pain. Now, I answer, taking baptism in this its first Scriptural sense, such baptism doth not save,

such baptism is not salvation, nor regeneration, nor conversion, nor renewal of heart. For will it be alleged, that any sufferings of any one who could thus be baptized are expiatory? What Jesus says is, “ I have a baptism that ye cannot be baptized with;” that is, “ I am to undergo sufferings that are in their nature expiatory or atoning, and no sufferings of yours can in any sense whatever be expiatory or atoning; and therefore you cannot be baptized with my baptism.” And we ourselves are persuaded, that no tears which a penitent can shed can wash away the least taint of the transgression of a thought,—no blood that a martyr can pour forth can cleanse away his sins. Those who emerged from great tribulation, and had their robes made white and sparkling like the driven snow, had washed their robes, not in their own blood, but in the blood of the Lamb. And here the inference is, that no sufferings which we can undergo can expiate our sins, or make atonement for our souls, for if they can really do so, then they have such an efficacy as ought to render unnecessary the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus.

The next sense in which baptism is used in Scripture is, endowment with the miraculous

powers of the Holy Ghost. Baptism means investiture or endowment with the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost. I turn first to Matthew iii. 11, where John is recorded to have said, "I indeed baptize you with water"—you observe, baptism is not necessarily connected with water—so much so, that John adds "with water," in order to distinguish—"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Therefore, the word "baptism" has nothing to do essentially and inseparably with water. You may be baptized with water, or you may be baptized with fire, or you may be baptized with sufferings. It means any of them, or all of them together, not necessarily any one particularly. So again, in Acts i. 5. "For John truly baptized with water"—that is one baptism; "but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence"—that is, endowed with the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit, which is another baptism. So again, the word is used in the same sense in Acts xi. 15. "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the

beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water"—that was his function; "but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost;" that is, endowed, as the sequel proves, with miraculous powers. Now, having ascertained this second sense of *baptisma*, or of the verb *baptizo*, I add, that this baptism is not necessarily regeneration—this baptism confessedly does not save. You say, Why? I answer, Because our blessed Lord says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (that is, been baptized in this sense with the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost). "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Judas was thus baptized if the other apostles were, and did miracles like the other apostles, and yet the record is distinct, that Judas went "to his own place." It is plain that there is a baptism that is not regeneration, namely, the baptism which is the endowment with the miraculous powers of the Holy Ghost, with which men have been invested, endowed, or

baptized, but who have proceeded to the prison of lost spirits, unforgiven and unrenewed, strangers to regeneration.

The third sense of baptism is, an outward rite with water, or what John calls baptizing "with water." Some evidences of this I also give, though, of course, such are not so necessary; but as I have quoted the others, I give these too. In Acts viii. 26, we have the following: "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The

place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way," after this evidence of conversion, "they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" With what? Water. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." That is the pre-requisite of baptism in the case of an adult, for of this only I am now speaking. "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." I may just note, as I pass, that there is no proof here that the eunuch was immersed. I am not discuss-

ing whether immersion or sprinkling is right—in my opinion either is sufficient; but this passage does not prove immersion more than sprinkling; for it is said, that not only did the eunuch go into the water, but that Philip went also; they both went into the water; but the most severe advocate of immersion, at least so I believe, for I have never seen an immersion, will not hold that both the minister and the recipient ought to be immersed in the water at the same time. Thus, we have an evidence of the strict sense of baptism with water. So again, in Acts x. 44: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost,” that is, evidently, the miraculous gift. “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized”—with water that is—“in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.”

Now those two passages are illustrations of the enforcement and fulfilment of our blessed Lord's command, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In quoting, however, that commission, I may just notice, that there are two distinct words used in the original, each of which our translators unfortunately render "teach." Our translation is, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." But those two words rendered "teach" and "teaching," are perfectly distinct in the original tongue. I will give you the exact and faithful translation. "Go and *discipleize* all nations, baptizing," or, if you like, "by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" and then, subsequently to their baptism, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We have therefore, baptism used in the sense in which it is commonly accepted, or baptism with water.

Now we assert, this baptism doth not necessarily save—this baptism is not necessarily regeneration; for, as I shall show in a subsequent part of my statement, and one instance is conclusive, there have been cases where men have been baptized in this third sense, and yet have not been regenerate,—where they have been sprinkled with water, or dipped in water, which you please, and yet they have remained just as they were, “dead in trespasses and sins.”

Now let us refer to the fourth sense in which the word “baptism” is used—the baptism that really is regeneration, and in which sense you may use and apply the word “baptism,” provided the party, in whose hearing you apply it, clearly understands your meaning. I refer to Romans vi. 3, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?” But what is the consequence of that baptism—the invariable consequence? “Therefore we,” the subjects of it, “are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we,” the subjects of it, “also should walk in newness of life. For if we,” the subjects of it, “have been planted together in the

likeness of his death, we," the same subjects of this baptism, "shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead"—buried with him by this baptism—"is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ," in virtue of this baptism, "we believe that we shall also live with him." Now you may just substitute for "baptism" there the word "conversion"—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were converted, renewed, made new into Jesus Christ, were converted into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by regeneration or renewal into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been renewed, or converted, or regenerated together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." I quote another passage — Col. ii. 10. "And ye are complete in Christ, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised," using it in the sense of baptism, as the next verse shows, "with the

circumcision made without hands," that is, not the outward rite, but this, namely, "in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Now the subjects of this burial in baptism with Christ are declared to be regenerated men: in this sense baptism is conversion; in this sense, according to Peter, baptism doth save us, and in this sense the thief upon the cross was baptized; but he was never baptized with water, for he never had the opportunity, and yet he was baptized with that baptism not made with hands, that is, with the inner baptism of the Holy Spirit of God, and became therefore a new creature. And it is a remarkable fact, which shows that the outer baptism is neither the inner baptism, nor essential even to it, though dutiful in an orderly and

rightly constituted church, that there is not one record in the New Testament that any one of the apostles was baptized. Now it seems a remarkable thing, and one would think it would strike with great force those who hold baptismal regeneration, that there is positively no evidence in the whole New Testament that the apostles were baptized, and there is no evidence that they thought that that outer baptism with water was necessarily a saving and a sanctifying grace. And as we have evidence that the thief upon the cross was baptized with that baptism which is saving and is regeneration, therefore we say that outer baptism is not essential in every case; and as we have no proof that the apostles were baptized with water, but overwhelming proof that they had that inner and true baptism, which is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we have therefore evidence that there is an inner baptism that is essential, and an outer baptism dutiful in ordinary circumstances, but not necessary in all circumstances. Perhaps some will say that we cannot accept your assertion that the apostles were not baptized. I do not absolutely assert it, all I say is that there is no record of it in the New Testament. But if

any choose to persist in the opposite assertion, that the apostles were baptized, it will only in another way establish my point the more; for if all the apostles were baptized, Judas was also baptized; and therefore he had the outer baptism with water and perished with it, whilst the thief upon the cross had the inner baptism without water, and was saved, and that very day admitted into paradise.

There are thus four senses in which baptism is used, and in the last sense we find a kind of baptism of saving power; but for men to allege that baptism with water is necessarily to be charged with all the effects of the other three baptisms, is to confound things that clearly differ, and differ to the plainest reader, throughout the whole word of God. Therefore, when any one says to you, "Baptism is regeneration," do not say, "It is not"—that is not the way to reply; but ask him to define his terms—ask him which baptism? If he says that baptism is the regeneration of the Holy Ghost, it certainly is so; but if he says that baptism with water is essentially regeneration, then he is wrong, and is proclaiming a heresy as deadly and as mischievous, in its consequences, as its correlative

and sister heresy, transubstantiation: for the party who makes baptism with water regeneration, does with one sacrament what others, who make the bread and wine the literal body and blood of Christ, do with the other sacrament. The one ascribes to the water the virtues which belong to the Holy Spirit; the others pretend to change the bread and wine into the Deity and humanity of Jesus. Both equally pervert signs by turning them into substances, instead of holding them as the signs of great and precious truths. Let us, therefore, keep these baptisms distinct, as I have now endeavoured to show them, and there will be no possible misapprehension about the meaning of the rite of baptism. I would add, while on this subject, that there is a creed about which a very acute and talented prelate has made a great deal of noise, the Nicene Creed. Now he says, and says truly, there is in that creed this sentence, "One baptism for the remission of sins;" and every reply that he makes to any poor curate who dares to doubt that water baptism is regeneration, is ever eloquent of this; "One baptism for the remission of sins;" "one baptism for the remission of sins." Now, in answer to this, I would say, I

believe that there is one baptism for the remission of sins, but the baptism, my lord, which I thus regard, is not the baptism which you mean, namely, with water, which is the one baptism, according to you, for the remission of sins; but it is the baptism which I quoted from the Colossians and the Romans, and which an apostle holds to be most truly the remission of sins—a baptism that neither presbyter nor prelate can give, the sovereign gift of the Holy Spirit, at all times, and in all ages. I may just add, what is in no less conformity with what I have said, that the text upon which I am commenting, makes the distinction in the most unmistakeable terms; for what does Peter say? He evidently anticipated the perversion that would be made of his meaning, for he states, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us;” but now mark what he adds, (“not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience toward God;”) or, translated into what is plainly the idea that the apostle meant, “The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us; not water baptism, not washing outside, but the answer of a good conscience;” which, as I shall show, is requisite alike for ap-

proach to the Lord's table, and for acceptance of the baptismal rite—"the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." We, therefore, see from Peter's own statement, that there may be a baptism which is not the answer of a good conscience, as there is a baptism which is the answer of a good conscience. In other words, there may be, says Peter, the ecclesiastical rite; there may not be, under it, and with it, and inseparable from it, the inner and the spiritual change—in short, there may be the outer baptism, and not the inner. There may be the washing of the forehead, and not the washing of the heart. The great work of the gospel is the inner one; and if men would only recollect, in these days of disputes about a thousand extrinsic points, that the kingdom of God is not "meat nor drink," not dipping or sprinkling, not baptism with water, or any other, but is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," they would estimate all signs, ceremonies, and rites, by the inner results to which they conduct, and would not put the one in the room of the other. Thus there is a baptism which is strictly and properly regeneration—that which the Holy Spirit bestows; and there is a baptism which is not re-

generation, but the simple sign of it—that which the minister can give. If we would also ever recollect another fact, I think we should not confound things that differ; namely, that there is a visible church, with visible ceremonies, and that there is an inner church, visible as man may be, but undefinable in its limits by us, ever characterized by the inner change and inner feelings; and the one corresponding to the other, as the shell corresponds with the kernel. You have in the outer church, baptism with water; you have in the inner church, baptism with the Holy Spirit; you have in the outer church, communion with those who are partaking of the bread and wine upon the table; you have in the inner church, that communion which is the consciousness of our fellowship and communion with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these two correspond the one to the other. The minister can distribute the bread and wine, and can administer the sacrament of baptism to outer recipients, but the Holy Spirit alone, when and where he pleases, can give the inner baptism; and the Lord Jesus, when and where he pleases, can establish the inner and true communion with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What is this inner baptism which is here de-

clared to be so vital, and which is not the necessary and the inseparable accompaniment of that outer baptism which has been so often and so fruitlessly administered. It is said to be, "The answer of a good conscience toward God." Now what is meant by the answer of a good conscience toward God? The very first idea that is suggested, and the essential definition of that idea, is found in Heb. ix. 13, "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh"—that is, an outer rite, an outer ceremony—"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" Here, then, is the answer of a good conscience—it is, in its first and essential feature, a conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ Jesus; and the true baptism is referred to, in connexion with this, in the beautiful announcement of which Luther made so much, but of which we make so little, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" or if you like, "baptizeth us from all sin;" for I do not think that βαπτίζω and καθαιρω are essentially

different; and if you ask me what is the baptism that each converted man must have, I would answer, it is that baptism which is announced in these words, and free to all, like the air we breathe, like the light we see, like the waves of the great deep—"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son baptizeth, or cleanseth, us from all sin." What therefore we have to do first in order to get that true baptism, whether we have been baptized in infancy or in riper years, or whether we have not been baptized at all; the baptism that is instantly obligatory upon us, the baptism without which we cannot be forgiven, the baptism which we press as our privilege at this very moment, is instant confidence in this, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us" from venial sin and mortal sin, sin of thought, sin of word, sin of deed, all past transgressions—no sin is so deep in its dye that it will not expunge it; no sinner so inveterate in his sins that it will not forgive him; but an universal amnesty for all that will, in the blood of sprinkling, now, or, it may be, never. Have we consciences thus baptized? Have our hearts been thus cleansed by the blood of Jesus? To ascribe this great efficacy to any rite, or

ceremony, or sacrament, is to try to steal a ray of glory from the Lord of the sacrament, and to put it on the sacrament; and whoever does so will find that ray of glory convey a curse only into his own bosom. The only end of making baptism by water do what regeneration does, is to exalt the priest, to magnify the ceremony, and to put a precious rite, precious in its place, in the room of Him who often acts through means, often without means, and sometimes in spite of and against means. If there be one truth in Protestant Christianity more real and precious than another, it is this, that it brings us at once into contact and communion with God; and it is the grand characteristic of every thing that usurps its place, that it keeps us trifling with the minister, or amused with the ceremony, or in contact with the sacrament, or stopping at some of the porches and outer gates of the sanctuary, instead of leading us to the very holy of holies, and there encouraging us to hold communion and fellowship face to face with God. This is the great feature, this the precious characteristic, of all true and scriptural religion. Have our consciences been thus baptized? Will you allow me, my dear reader, to

question your conscience? I do not want you to answer me, but yourself to answer God; and to ascertain, by the answer that you have within, whether your conscience has been baptized in that blood of sprinkling which cleanseth from all sin.

First, then, I ask, what think you of Christ? What answer do you give to that? What weight do you lay upon his death? What do you think of his atonement? What is he to you? Would you be what you are now, if you had never heard the majestic truth, a God has suffered that sinners might be redeemed? Do you count all but loss for the excellency of him? Would you be ready to part with all for his sake? Can you say, He is my only Mediator; his blood my only trust, his death my only hope; his finished work my only plea, and title to immortality and glory? If your conscience can say, Yes, so far as that question goes, you have the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Let me ask, in the next place, what is your hope, and what is your feeling towards the Holy Spirit of God? Are you satisfied with baptism with water? Are you satisfied with being decent with a decent externalism? Are you satisfied

with being a man of indifferent life, but having, on the whole, a good heart—one of the greatest possible misstatements and misapprehensions? Do you feel, in all its force, this great pre-requisite of heaven, “Except a man be born again,” it matters not who he is, from the highest monarch to the meanest subject,—“except a man be born again”—what a change! what a revolution! a transition from one state totally distinct from the state into which you are introduced,—“except a man be born again, he cannot” even “see,” much less “enter the kingdom of heaven.” Do you feel, therefore, that that change must pass upon you? Is it your petition that that change may pass upon you? Is it your feeling, that though there may be much alloy to be removed, much dross, much deficiency, that yet your heart loves what once it hated, delights in what once it had no pleasure in, and cleaves to Him to whom it never clave supremely before? I say supremely, because a man should love his profession, but not supremely. Men generally perish, not by the love of the forbidden, but through the excessive love of that which is perfectly lawful.

Let me ask, in the third place, what is your opinion of God the Father? Do you think of

him with terror? Does your conscience, like poor Eve, run from the sound of his footstep, and seek a hiding-place, not amid the bowers of the garden, but amid the follies, and the vanities, and the frivolities of this present world? Or do you feel his presence delightful? Would you feel, while you were writing in your ledger, if God were visibly to look on, that you could not stand it? If it be so, then there is something in that ledger that ought not to be there. Do you feel, when you are in your counting-house, and adjusting your losses and your gains, that if God were to come in, all would be wrong? The Papal idea is more or less in us all. We think it is all very well to keep God within the four walls of the church; but we will have nothing to do with him outside. You come within the walls of the sanctuary to learn the lessons that you are to go forth in the world to carry out; at your counting-houses, where you may do very much active good, or at your desk, or upon the ocean, or in the parliament, or in the defence of your rights and liberties. For in all these things you are doing God's work, as truly as I do, when from the heart I speak to the hearts of my people. Christianity is not a Sun-

day garment, to put on the first day of the week, and then to be immediately taken off the wearer, fearful lest it should be soiled in the world's dusty roads—that is not Christianity. Christianity is not a splendid procession, a gorgeous ceremony, a beautiful rite; but it is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. What is your view, then, of God? Do you think of him with awe, with dismay? Do you pray to him exactly as a criminal in the dock would do to a judge about to pronounce sentence upon him?—that is not Christianity. You may go to God, if you are baptized with the true baptism, not as a criminal, to deprecate his wrath, but as a son and child, to seek a Father's grand benediction. It is the grand peculiarity of the gospel, that it brings us into communion with God the Father, and that we may approach him with confiding love, with all the absence of suspicion with which a loving child flies to the bosom of its loving mother, finding there a shelter from the stranger's gaze, and a protection from the perils that assail; complete, unsuspected, and entire. I believe that there is no better test of our Christianity, than the feelings that we have in reference to God.

What think you of death? Let conscience answer that. I do not say you should love death—that would be absurd. I have often said, that I believe death to be a most unnatural thing; have you not noticed that the brute creation feel it so? When a dog dies, as if conscious that death is the projected shadow of Adam's sin, he runs into a hole or nook that none may look on. What is that but the brute creation groaning for deliverance, and giving evidence that sin has entered, and so death has passed upon all. I do not ask you, then, do you seek to die; I do not say that you should love death—we cannot love it—it is impossible; but I ask, if it were to come, which it must, and it is well we know not when—whether it overtakes you in its dreadest aspect, as in the case of the crew of the Amazon, or whether it comes in its more quiet movements, when surrounded with sympathizing friends—I ask, if it come as a friend, could you say, I will welcome it? If it come as a foe, could you say, I will defy it; and will be content to pass through the valley, drear and dark as it is, for the sake of what is beyond it—I will enter it with unfaltering footstep, for “thy rod and thy staff they comfort me”?

Let me ask, in the next place, your conscience, and let your conscience answer, what do you think of the great white throne? Would you feel then that your judge is, and was, your Saviour? Would you recognise, in his accents, these of Him who loved you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood? Can you begin the triumphant pæan of an apostle, and say, "All things are mine, life, death, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, things present, things past, and things to come; all are mine, for I am Christ's, and Christ is God's?" Can you say, in the language of lofty, but magnificent and Christian defiance, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"? Let your conscience answer; let the questions that I ask find an answer, not an echo there.

What do you think, I ask, of God's holy word? Is it to you a very dull book, a very dry book, a very uninteresting tale? or is it the book of your study? Do you feel it to be full of seams of gold, so that he who digs deep-

est gathers most? Do you find that word like a glorious ocean, whose floor is covered with precious pearls, so that he who dives oftenest and deepest, brings up most? Do you regard it as the light to your path, the canon of your faith, by which you test difficulties? the canon of your life, by which you try all its features?

What does your conscience answer respecting the Lord's day? Is it the most precious of all? Is it the sweetest, even, as it has been called, the princess of the week, a transcript in spirit, if not in fact, on the earth that now is, from the joyous heaven that will be? And are you glad when Saturday comes? and are you sorry, if a Christian should be sorry, when sabbath closes? Beautiful idea, there is one day in the week when the greatest and the poorest in the land can meet together, and say, We are peers, and God is the Maker of us all! What a noble equality is this, what a real and substantial brotherhood! Do not wonder that ministers of the gospel seek so often to get the sabbath vindicated—its extinction would be an irreparable loss. I would rather see all our cathedrals, beautiful as they are, swept to the bottom of the sea, than that day profaned, and snatched from

the poor man's home, and from all men's sanctuary. How do you love the Lord's day? I do not mean a Jewish sabbath; I do not advocate the very peculiar views that some have; it is a joyous and holy day; God blessed it, not cursed it—it is a festival, not a fast; it is a day for all that improves our hearts and instructs our minds—for expressing our wants in prayer and our thanks in praise. If we be Christ's we love it.

What do we think of the Lord's table? Do we regard it as a resting-place, the recurrence of which, time after time, we rejoice in? Do we come to the Lord's table, not as to an awful tragedy, but as to a glad and beautiful festival, a eucharistic or thanksgiving offering? God wishes us only good; it is our privilege to be there; it is his promise to meet us there; it is an occasion on which there should be many bounding hearts, and few if any heavy ones. It is a day on which we meet a Father at a Father's board, and tell him of our failings, our falterings, and our mercies, and ask of him that blessing especially over the symbols of his love, which he rejoices to bestow. Can we say, that with all our falterings, and failings, and short-comings,

and misgivings, the bent and strain of our hearts are towards joy, and holiness, and heaven? Can we say, there is much in me to deplore, still more that needs to be forgiven; much that will break out, worse, probably, than ever broke out before; and yet can each say, "For my rejoicing is the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation in the world."

One word more, and I have done. True religion is not a thing political, nor a thing ecclesiastical, nor a thing corporate, but a thing personal,—it is the answer of the individual conscience. You cannot be saved as one of a body, you must be saved individually. Whatever system goes to depreciate personal religion, is a mischievous one. That system that would shut the closet, or would rather cover up the text, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet," in order to exalt the temple, only goes to destroy both; there must first be individual dealing with God, before there can be any true and acceptable public worship before him.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VICTORY OF FAITH.

“ The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.”

“ And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.”—
GEN. vii. 5.

BELIEVERS gained victories in antediluvian days. We are told by another penman that Noah built the ark by faith; that by faith he entered into it, preached a righteousness that was the only title to salvation, and became himself, by faith, the heir of the righteousness which is by faith. (Heb. xi.) We are told in the one page of Scripture, that Noah lived, and walked, and triumphed by faith; we are told in another passage of Scripture, that he was righteous—alone righteous—in that generation; and that because he believed, and was thus righteous, doing all that God commanded him, he was saved in the judgment that overtook and overwhelmed the world. There is no more con-

tradiction here between the assertion that faith was all by the one penman, and the assertion that his personal righteousness was all by the other penman, than there is contradiction between Paul, who says we are justified by faith, and James, who says we are justified by works. The faith is the root and spring out of which the righteousness which is by faith, that is, sanctification of character, must continually proceed; and it was just because Noah lived by faith, that Noah's life was illustrated by righteousness. In other words, the faith of the gospel of Christ is not a solitary ascetic, that builds its cell and lives in it alone, but, on the contrary, the prolific parent of whatsoever things are pure, and just, and honest, and lovely, and of good report—to faith is added virtue, and to virtue brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. It is thus that faith in a Christian's heart is the source of all the good works that adorn a Christian's life; and it is to illustrate the connexion between these two that I proceed to unfold these words—"Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him."

Before entering on this, I would observe, that good works are not stones added to faith, as if

it were only a lower stone in the superstructure, disconnected with it, yet instantly following it, or laid upon it; but they are fruits, and flowers—the same vitality that is in the root is in the topmost bough; and the tree bears fruit, because it has life. Therefore a symbol of a Christian is that of a tree, that by faith brings forth fruits of righteousness, and not that of a building—one stone laid upon another, and others superadded continuing the courses.

To show the faith that Noah must have had, and how truly it was by faith in God's word that he surmounted no ordinary obstacles, I would state some of those difficulties which must have presented themselves to Noah's mind. He may have thought, surely God will not be so severe. I have found him a loving, affectionate, and kind Father; I have found him bearing and forbearing. And he might have argued, as the serpent argued with Adam and Eve, "Ye shall not surely die." God has uttered this as a threat which he does not mean to execute; and therefore I will not be at the trouble of making such vast preparations for what, in all probability, will not occur at all.

Again, the reasoning of the enemies of God

must have appeared to Noah very startling, though not strong enough to arrest his procedure. Some of the scientific men of that day said, no doubt, Where will sufficient water be found? How shall such a weight of water be lifted from the depths of the sea, and made to overflow the highest hills? If the worst come to the worst, and there be this flood, we shall find shelter in some spots that it will not reach, or we shall be able to set afloat some vessels, in which we shall be saved. And therefore we will neither enter the ark, nor believe your prophecy, nor in any way accept your proposals. Now the only answer that Noah could give to all this was, "Thus saith the Lord." Probably Noah could not answer scientific objections by scientific solutions, but he could say, "Thus saith the Lord" created the world, and "Thus saith the Lord" maintains it, and "Thus saith the Lord" is able to reduce it to its pristine chaos—as it is positively predicted. So must it be. We must not look at a thing that could have been, or how it is possible it may be, but simply ascertain from that Book, which speaks without error, what God has said, and what his holy mind is.

Noah, too, in doing all that God commanded him, must himself have felt that he had great difficulties to encounter. He had not only the doubts and suspicions of his own heart to overcome, he had not only the cavils and the objections of his enemies to repel, but he had also difficulties in his own inward feelings and personal position, that must have made him hesitate not a little. How shall I build a vessel, he may have thought, seeing I have never lifted an axe before? and how shall I, who am not a sailor, navigate it upon unknown tempestuous seas without a chart, a compass, or any acquaintance with the management of the helm? And if I do so, how shall I induce all the beasts of the earth, and the birds of the air, and the creeping things, pair by pair, to enter into this ark? These difficulties, no doubt, did array themselves in his imagination, and made him sometimes hesitate. But faith can think what others only dream of, and it can do what others think, and it can triumph where others only attempt. And having, therefore, God's word, "This shall be," and God's command, "This do you," Noah by faith "did according unto all that the Lord commanded him."

Thus it was by faith that Noah set to work, and built the ark, and prepared for the coming Flood—and that faith, we read, was crowned with triumphant results ; and those who doubted his word, and disbelieved God's being, as well as the possibility of God's judgments, soon saw that the old fanatic—they proclaimed him to be so a hundred years before—was the true and faithful prophet. When the fountains of the great deep and the windows of heaven began to break open, and all nature, as if rising on earth against humanity, opened its terrible artillery upon the world, they who once laughed at him as a fanatic, accepted him as a prophet ; they who expelled him from their society were now almost ready to worship him. The greatest sceptics are invariably, in the hour of approaching danger, the greatest cowards, and the rebound from utter derision to idolatry is a very easy and a very frequent one.

Noah, as another part of what God commanded him, spoke to the creatures—the four-footed beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, and all creeping things, and summoned them to come into the ark. At first he feared this was an impossible thing ; but no sooner did he

open his lips to utter God's command, than instantly all the animated things heard and obeyed him. Here was a vestige of the ancient dominion over nature, which man had lost, restored to Noah upon this occasion—teaching us that still the way to recover man's lost dominion over nature, is for him to recover God's image upon his own soul. Noah obeyed God, and all nature obeyed Noah. The highest servant of God will always be found to be the greatest sovereign of nature around him. And do we not see traces of this in the fact, that as nations grow in their Christian character, in the same ratio almost do they grow in all that ennobles, elevates, and exalts a country? Where is it that you find the highest science, the purest literature, the noblest philosophy? Are not these plants that grow upon the soil that has been watered by the dew, and shone upon by the beams of the Sun of righteousness? Where is it that you see man the great sea-lord and landlord of all? It is where Christianity has its deepest hold, and where its transforming influence has been most thoroughly felt. Just in proportion as a nation grows in its moral character, does it recover its mastery over the ani-

mate and inanimate creation around it—a fore-token, a pledge, and an earnest of that day that will surely come, when man shall have restamped upon him once more the perfect image of his God, and nature again shall recognise her Sovereign and her Lord in him. The reins were dropped when Adam fell; the reins will be replaced in man's hand when the second Adam comes. He lost his sovereignty by sin, he will regain his sovereignty by righteousness; and the beasts obeying Noah, and the miracles that Jesus did, are all pledges and earnest that it will ultimately be so.

Another part of what Noah did, as God commanded him, was to walk with God. It is recorded in another passage that Noah walked with God. This is a very beautiful and expressive proof of Christian character. He walked safely, because where God advanced, he moved; where God stood, he stood still; and thus walking with God, rough places became smooth, difficulties disappeared, hills were levelled, valleys were filled up, and all things became plain to him who felt that he was overshadowed by the power, and inspired by the directing wisdom, of Almighty God. The course that we are to

pursue still, is just that course which was trodden by the footsteps of Noah before us—we too are to walk with God, doing what he commands, following the example that he sets, listening to a word upon the right hand and upon the left, saying continually, “This is the way, walk ye in it;” and so our last step will cross the valley of the shadow of death, and our footsteps echo on the floor of that everlasting rest that remaineth for the people of God. We find that what Noah did in obedience to the word of God was a victory; that each step that Noah took in the course prescribed and pointed out by God, was happiness to himself. They who doubted God’s word, and preferred the conclusions of their own sceptic wisdom, perished; he who believed, in the face of difficulties, in the spite of plausible objections, the simple “Thus saith the Lord,” proved in the issue the grandest philosopher, by being preserved alone—a monument of this great fact, that one word of God is stronger than the pillars that sustain the universe itself.

After Noah had thus acted, and entered the ark, and all things had happened as God predicted, though better than Noah expected,

we read, in beautiful words, in the 16th verse, that "God shut him in." What an exquisite touch is that single sentence—"God shut him in!" What a striking illustration that he who begins our course must end it, and that he who is the author of our salvation must also be its finisher! It was as necessary that God's hand should shut that door, as it was that God's prescriptions should open it. It was as necessary that God should take care of Noah while he was in the ark, as that God should appoint that ark as the retreat of safety for Noah and his family. If the ark be in any sense a type of our blessed Lord, it is as necessary that God should keep us in the Saviour, as it is that he should place us in the Saviour. Our salvation is not complete by being placed in Christ; it is only complete by being kept in Christ. We are told by an apostle, that "we are kept through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." And we are told by the Saviour himself, "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall be able to pluck them out of my hand." A Christian is not one who believes he is placed in Christ, and therefore ceases to hear, to pray, to look, to feel; but one who not only feels that

he must be placed in Christ by the hand that made him through the exercise of personal faith on his part, but who looks and leans on, and derives momentum and direction from, the same arm that put him there; and who feels at every step of his beautiful and happy progression, that unless the God keep him who first justified him, he can never see happiness and heaven. It is thus that a Christian feels the necessity of a ceaseless reliance upon God, and that he is safe not from the strength of his faith, but from the pledges and the promises of Him who gave it. When Noah was in that frail ark, he was safer than those who were in the strongest ships that floated and tried to find safety upon that tempestuous and agitated ocean. Not by the strength of his vessel, but by the protection of his God, was Noah safe. We too in Christ Jesus are safe, not because our faith is so strong, but because his hold of us is so real. I have no doubt that when Noah sat in the ark, and heard the heavy rains descend upon its roof, and felt the agitated and convulsive shock of the wave that swept by, and saw the peaks of the distant hills almost covered, he had many a fear, and was agitated by many a conflicting emotion,

and that he often thought that he should still be engulfed amid those merciless and deep waters. But because his faith trembled, and his fears predominated, his safety was not therefore imperiled. His safety was not the strength of his faith, but the protection and the promises of his God. And so a Christian now may in Christ Jesus, his better ark, have many a fear, and doubt, and sore perplexity, many a suspicion; but yet he is safe. The weakness of our faith does not affect the strength of our Saviour; we are safe, not in the strength of our faith, but only in the relationship—the unchanged and unchanging relationship—of Him who is our refuge and our shelter, and our salvation, and all we need to keep us prosperous and progressive upon earth, and finally to waft us across time's floods and tempests, not to a bleak Ararat again, to go down upon a poor and dismantled earth, but to the eternal hills of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Let us, after touching upon these points in Noah's obedience, notice, as applicable to us, that faith which Noah had, and the fruits of which are embodied in the single but expressive text, "Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him." The secret of our

safety from the floods of a coming judgment is faith in Christ, as truly, and as really, as the safety of Noah and his family from that deluge was entering into the ark. I do not institute here a parallel between Christ and the ark. I dwell upon this one point, that our safety from the coming judgments of heaven is just the same with reference to Christ, that Noah's safety from the coming deluge was with reference to that ark into which he entered, and in which he dwelt for a season. What is this faith then of ours, which is to be to us an element of such confidence? It is defined by an apostle, in language on which I shall comment again, as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is not merely a subscription to a creed, however orthodox; it is not a mere enthusiastic conviction, "It is all right with me;" it is not a blind credulity that accepts things with unreasoning submission; it is the inspiration of God's Spirit, that accepts truths that are avouched to be the truths of God by the signature they bear, and that gives hospitality in its bosom to many bright and certain hopes, that are sent as angel-visitants from Him who alone can give man faith, and

enrich man's heart with hope, and joy, and peace in believing.

This faith is not an emotion so totally different from the original furniture of our minds, that we can form no idea of it until we are changed by the Holy Spirit of God. Faith is found in every man's bosom in reference to some things. For instance, the confidence of a battalion, on the field of battle, in a great and experienced commander; the confidence of a crew in the captain of a ship in a heavy gale and in a tempestuous sea; the confidence that a merchant has in his far-distant correspondent, whom he never saw in the flesh, but in whom, nevertheless, he has perfect and implicit trust—all these are faith in the sphere of the human; and the faith which is saving is the transference of the same emotion, inspired by the Spirit of God, to the sphere of the Divine and the eternal. Thus faith in Christ Jesus is not an inconceivable thing. We all have some idea of it as that by which society hangs together and coheres; the exhaustion of which from the world of mankind would be the exhaustion of its only cement, and its precipitation into disorganization and moral chaos. Now, just conceive the transfer-

ence of your confidence in the leader of the army, in the captain of the ship, in the distant merchant, to Him who is the King of kings, the Captain of our salvation, in whom trust may be placed implicitly, and on whose word confidence may lean its weight, and not fear that one jot or tittle shall pass away until all shall be fulfilled. Thus we see faith in Christ Jesus is an emotion we are not wholly strangers to; thus faith inspired by his Holy Spirit, grows to be a saving grace, justified by which we have peace with God.

What a blessed fact is it, that God has placed our salvation on faith! A babe can trust when a babe cannot reason. A very infant can trust in its mother for its nutriment, its shelter, and its safety, though it cannot reason; and most men can trust in God's word, when they cannot reason out the why or the wherefore of it. If God, for instance, had made salvation contingent upon laborious study, upon elaborate induction, upon great learning, what would have become of the young, the illiterate, the mass of mankind? If God had said, You must be a Butler, or you must be a Paley, or some other great scholar, before you can get to heaven, what would have

become of the poor, the illiterate, the laborious? If God had said, You can get to heaven as a great scientific scholar, there would have been in that, in some degree, the product of man's own genius. But when He says, The great scholar and the illiterate man are both saved simply by what each can equally reach, their believing the word and the truth of God, there is nothing herein in which a man can glory. It is no merit to any to believe in a credible witness—you never heard it said that there was any credit in believing the testimony of a credible witness; and so, God making our salvation contingent upon our simply believing the testimony of the truth-telling God, takes away and nips in the very bud all ideas or possibility of self-glory, or self-righteousness, or merit of any kind. It is thus, we are saved by faith in God, that no flesh may glory; saved by faith, that no flesh may despair; saved by faith, that the scholar may not say, My learning did it, and I may glory in that; saved by faith, that the poorest and the most illiterate may not give up, as if the want of great attainments were a reason why they should lose the privileges, the blessings, and the hopes of the gospel of Christ. We are saved

in such a way that the loftiest and the poorest upon earth must believe in order to be saved ; we are saved in such a way that the worst of mankind may believe in order to be saved. There is no immorality too deep for the hand of Christ not to descend and pluck the victim from it ; and there is no purity so lofty, that it goes beyond the range of the requirement of a holy law, or of the need of the atoning and cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence we have in faith that which takes away all possibility of merit, which makes the gospel scheme so simple and so intelligible, which encourages all men, and calls upon them by the highest prospects of glory, and the fear of the greatest perils of the future, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and believing in him, to have life through his name.

Yet, this scheme of mercy, this mode of saving sinners, is not a plan that encourages in the least degree the licentiousness of the human heart. It is not true that, justified by faith alone, we are thereby absolved from all the obligations of God's unchangeable and lasting law. The best proof—that the greatest believers have ever been the greatest doers—has just been the record of the past. It was by faith that

Noah was saved, and yet the character of Noah was so righteous, so spotless, and his conduct so unimpeachable. It was by faith that Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and yet his life was characterized by a ceaseless walking with God. Thus, it appears from the perusal of the lives of sainted men, that they who made faith everything, and insisted upon it as the most vital and essential grace in the Christian character, were most characterized by all the fruits of the Spirit, and most diligently added to their faith virtue, and to virtue godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Faith, in Noah, was the source of Noah's obedience to God. Faith, in Abraham, was the secret of his going forth, he knew not whither, in obedience to the mandate of God. And the reason why faith is ever so holy in its fruits is, that the same faith that believes in the Saviour's atoning blood, believes in the necessity and the promise and the possession of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying virtue. The same heart that is open to receive Christ as an atonement, is in that opening made ready to receive the Holy Spirit as a Sanctifier. No true Christian believes that Christ came to ca

nonize the works of the devil, but every true Christian believes that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. The highest grace saves us, not in our sins, but from our sins,—their curse, their condemnation, and their power. Read the roll-call of the illustrious dead in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, every one of whose names is like a trumpet-sound, stirring and full of power, and you will find that it was those who were signalized by the most childlike faith who were also characterized by the most beautiful and ennobling traits of the Christian character, as that character is portrayed in the word of God. Thus we see how consistent it is, that one who by faith believed God's testimony, did, through the inspiration of that faith, all that God had commanded him.

There is another reason, I may state, why faith is so very precious. It is that grace which turns constantly to God, leans on him, watches for the expression of his will, sits at his feet, and is ever ready to go forth and do what he bids. This faith is the leaning of weakness upon Omnipotence, of the finite upon the infinite, of ignorance upon wisdom, and of sin

upon the rich mercy that is pledged and promised to wash it all away. Faith is to the Christian the attraction that draws him constantly to God, the vital chord along which God's love comes down to us, and in the enjoyment of which, therefore, we are replaced and reinstated in that union and communion with God which was lost by sin and is restored only in the gospel.

It is a very beautiful arrangement and very delightful to us, that this faith is the creature's resting not upon anything beneath it. If our faith be in a man, in a king, in a priest, in a saint, it is in something not higher than ourselves; but the grand provision of the gospel is, that our trust shall be exercised in One who is higher, holier, better, infinitely than we; that we shall approximate to One who is infinitely distant, but infinitely grand; that we shall lean upon One who is greater than all, and leaning upon whom we are increasingly ennobled, dignified, strengthened. Were the tree of a hundred years, or two or three hundred years, to lean upon a plant of two or three years, it would be absurd. It is the weak plant that leans upon the stronger of many centuries. A Christian is

the parasite of the Tree of Life—he leans upon it, derives his nutriment from it, and is strong, not in his own strength, but in its strength ; and is sheltered, not by his own leaves, but by its branches : so that in his safety, in his nutriment, in his leaning, in his direction, Christ—the Tree of Life—is all and in all. Wherever there is simple faith, there is also the most active obedience, the greatest dignity, the truest progress and happiness.

We read also, that on account of Noah's faith all his family were blessed. What an interesting and instructive lesson is in this simple fact, that our families are blessed in the ratio in which the heads of them lean on and take direction from God ! It is a law impressed upon the history of the world, that when the heads of nations do what is lawful and right, the meanest subjects of those nations share in the Divine benedictions. It is the law of the domestic circle, that the parent living unto God, and receiving direction from him, like a divine conductor, brings down blessings from the skies upon all that are around and beneath him. “Come thou and all thy house into the ark ; for thee”—not thee and all thy house have I seen, but “thee

have I seen righteous before me in this generation." What an inducement, then, is this to all who are in authority, to all who have great power, to seek to be, and to be sure that they are, inspired and directed by Almighty grace! Whether we approve of it or not, it is the law of nations, it is the testimony of God, that peoples and families are blessed when their heads and governors live in the fear of Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice.

Coming years may be to us, writer and reader, like the waters of the Flood to the antediluvian race, a new and awful baptism. Not a year that comes can be a pledge that the next will be one of national, or universal, or European prosperity, progress, happiness, and peace. Review the last six, or seven, or ten years: every year in succession has been an epoch—some striking phenomenon has characterized it; and what these have been, the coming years will be, and more: as the time gets shorter events will be crowded into them thicker; and those events will strike and tell with more startling momentum upon the nations and the history of mankind. Perhaps in another year or two the whole fountains of our social system may be

broken up; the great deeps of society, stirred by all strange elements; and the highest pinnacles and mountain crags of human grandeur and human greatness, may be overflowed by a more terrific flood than has ever swept the earth. 1853 will only be another stage in that progression in which we are now rushing. Are we, in the prospect of these things, in the true Ark? Have we entered by faith into the Son of God? It is not calculating what will be, or guessing what may be, or even acquaintance with unfulfilled prophecy, however valuable, that will shield and save us. Our safety is in the Ark, our shelter is in the Son of God. And if we, by living, personal, individual trust, are this day looking to his precious blood as the only absolution from our sins, and to his Holy Spirit as the only Sanctifier and Comforter, then come flood, come fire, come the breaking up of all ancient settlements, come the crashing and overturning of all great dynasties, let the windows of heaven pour down judgments, and the responsive deeps of society break up and pour forth their contents, yet we have "a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. God is our refuge and our strength."

We hear now what we shall try to realize then, "Come, my people, in the prospect of 1853, 1854, and their dire or welcome phenomena—come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors; wait a little moment until the indignation be overpast." Is this your shelter? Is this your refuge? Let every man examine himself; let us try ourselves, let us ascertain where our trust is, what is our dependence at this moment, and, in the prospect of the future, where we stand now in the present. Noah preached to thousands who would not hear him; let not the ministers of the gospel preach to you, and find you also equally sceptical. They perished temporally; we perish, by neglecting the great salvation, eternally. Christ himself preaches to us, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And if we are in that Ark, however poor, however minute, and insignificant in the social scale, God can no more forget us than he can forget himself. What a blessed thought is it, that he who remembered Noah in the ark, watched every wave, meted out every wind, shaped its course, and carried to Ararat, is as truly taking care of the poorest Christian

orphan or widow, as if that orphan or widow were the only being in the whole universe! A mother may forget her son, that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb; yet will God not forget thee. He has graven thee upon the palms of his hands, he holds thee in everlasting remembrance. "For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." Again, reader, let me ask, are you in Christ, the true Ark? Do you trust in him for eternal things, for spiritual things, as much as the soldier leans on his colonel, as the merchant trusts in his correspondent, as the sailor looks to the captain of the vessel? Do you trust truly, really, enthusiastically, in reference to the soul's safety and happiness, in Christ

Jesus, the only one who can save, sanctify, and preserve it? It is a simple question; it is a vital one; and we beseech you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God; for he hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God by him.

CHAPTER XII.

HIGH CHURCHMANSHIP.

“ Mothers can tell how oft
In the heart's eloquence the prayer goes up
From a sealed lip ; and tenderly hath blent
With the warm teaching of the sacred tale,
A voiceless wish, that when that timid soul,
Now in the rosy mesh of infancy
Fast bound, shall dare the billows of the world,
Like that exploring dove, and find no rest,
A pierced, a pitying, a redeeming hand
May gently guide it to the ark of peace.”

“ Come thou and all thy house into the ark.”—GEN. vii. 1.

WE are told, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it was “ by faith ” that “ Noah prepared the ark, to the saving of himself and household ; ” and we are told, by the apostle Peter, that spiritual “ baptism,” the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is connected in the way we have seen with the symbol that is here employed in the book of Genesis.

“ Noah ” means “ rest,” or “ repose ; ” and as such, we believe that Noah is an expressive symbol, or at least illustrative to his extent, of

Him who is the only rest of his believing people. Our Lord himself says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and he is frequently spoken of in Scripture as the "*Noah*" of his people—that is, the rest of his people. Now whether the one was designed to be a type of the other, I cannot say; but, certainly, the meaning of the one is an inadequate expression for the excellence, perfection, and glory of the other. There is but one *Noah* in the whole universe of God—the Lord Jesus Christ; there is but one spot, from the nadir up to the very zenith, which can be the rest of an immortal soul, or a foundation for the superstructure of our hopes and prospects for eternity. All things change but Christ. Opinions, politics, parties, preferences, prejudices—all are undergoing a perpetual change; and in the present day there seems to be that social ferment which precedes new combinations—that disintegration of the atoms that constitute society which always takes place prior to new crystalization. But amidst the changes of empires, the fall of dynasties, the war of parties, the collision of sentiments, One remains—the great central column of the universe, against

which we may lean and feel at ease—our Noah, our rest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Noah was not only a “rest,” as his name denotes, but “a preacher of righteousness.” Noah preached the righteousness of Christ—Christ preaches his own; Noah’s language was, “Behold the Lamb of God”—Christ’s language is, “I that speak unto thee am he.” Noah preached that only righteousness which has been, and ever will be, the only mode of a sinner’s acceptance before God; and hence the righteousness which Noah preached, and which Christ performed, is the righteousness in which the antediluvians trusted, in which Abraham and the patriarchs gloried, which the Levitical shadows and sacrifices typified, which prophets foretold, which Christ completed, which evangelists recorded, which apostles proclaimed, and martyrs sealed with their blood at the stake. There have never been two ways of acceptance before God, or two religions. There is and has been but one. It was developed from Paradise to Calvary, but still the same. The antediluvian was the seed, the patriarchal was the stem, the Levitical was the bud—the Christian is the full-grown tree in fragrant and beauteous blossom. It is the per-

fection only, not the opposite, of all the preceding; hence Christianity is not a new religion, but the old religion; and Protestantism, its last type, is only Christianity in conflict with the errors that have overlaid it, and the superstitions that have been incrustated upon it.

Though Noah was “a preacher of righteousness,” all his warnings were despised by the generation to whom he addressed them. What does this teach us? That truth never has been popular in the world. It is not only a world of sin, but a world of lies; and man has ever loved the lie, which speaks to him peace; and he has ever hated the truth, that rebukes his sins and proclaims the reality of his condition. Never was truth preached in the world more faithfully or more affectionately than Jesus preached it; and never did truth meet with a more stern or terrible rejection. The fact is, that man, till he is taught by the Spirit of God, cannot stand the truth about himself; for to hear the whole truth, and feel it, about his state by sin, would make him—must make him—either commit suicide, or believe in Christ Jesus. The whole truth about his state, must either drive a man to the very brink of despair, or it

must draw him unto Him who puts an end to all despair, by forgiving all sin. When Noah preached to the world the judgments that were ready to overwhelm it, I have already said that it was likely demonstrated to the entire satisfaction of all the scientific institutes of the antediluvian world, that the flood was an impossibility and an absurdity; when Noah predicted its advent, the astronomers of that day proved to absolute demonstration, that no planetary force could be exerted adequate to move the ocean from its oozy bed, and to make it overflow the highest mountains of the earth; and the geologists of his time argued, that the lower strata of the earth consisted of fire, rather than of water; and I have as little doubt that the *Charivari* and newspaper caricaturists of the time mocked the fanatic old man, for telling them that the Flood was about to overflow the world, and sweep them from the face of the earth. But the great fact which upset all theories came in the bursting earth, and the opening firmament of heaven, and the Flood, that swept away the demonstrations and the demonstrators with them. So will it be again. We are told that in the last days "there shall be scoffers, walking after their

own lusts ;” and they shall say, “ Where is the promise of His coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the creation of the world ;” not knowing that “ one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” And “ as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh ; men shall be eating, and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage,” even as they were when the Flood came.

So much for the person here spoken of.

Let me now notice, in the second place, the object—the ark. There are two things which bear the same name—the ark in which Noah and his family floated to Ararat, and the ark of the testimony, which was kept in the holy place, and covered with the mercy-seat. These are two very different things. The ark here is the wooden vessel, constructed after the prescription of God, which carried Noah and his family across the waters, and landed them on Ararat. I look upon the ark of Noah in no respect as the type and the symbol of the Saviour. I prefer much to regard it as the type and symbol of the catholic church of the Lord Jesus

Christ. I mean by that church, not any visible communion upon earth, but the company of all redeemed and true believers. In other words, I look upon it as the symbol of the true church, which we estimate not by the size of its cathedrals, or the height of its spires, or the number of its baptisms; but by its likeness to God, and conformity to the image of Jesus. Hence I have always felt it an insuperable objection to the Tractarian divines, that they are so very low churchmen; we are rightly and properly the true high churchmen. Dr. Watts shows, in many of his hymns, that he was a far higher churchman than Mr. Keble or Mr. Williams, who sing the glories and the excellencies of what they call the church. The church of the Tractarian is a church limited by the height of the spire of the cathedral; the church of the Christian is a church which stretches beyond the stars. Their church is one which includes Italy and Austria, and excludes Scotland and Holland, and a large portion of America; our church is one which includes people of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, whose towers stretch beyond the firmament, and repose amid the effulgence of the presence of God.

Dr. Watts shows himself, Congregationalist as he was, to have been a true churchman, when he sings :

“ I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The church our bless'd Redeemer bought
With his own precious blood.

“ I love thy church, O God ;
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.

“ Beyond my highest joys
I prize her heavenly ways—
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise.”

We cannot feel our idea of the church satisfied with any visible Christian institution upon earth. All visible churches are provisional, not perfect. Our churchmanship rises far above popes, and prelates, and presbyters,—we can find the great idea defined only in the word of God, and the lofty and glorious reality embodied in the presence of the throne of God himself. Hence I have thought, that even one single sound from David's lyre, although that sound comes through the rugged Scottish version—

“ Upon the hills of holiness
God his foundation sets ;

God more than Jacob's dwellings all
Delights in Zion's gates:—

has more true churchmanship than all Mr. Keble's drivelling poetry about "holy mother." We are churchmen — high churchmen; the Tractarians are mere schismatics and dissenters, setting up a human altar against the Divine one.

Into this ark we invite all, as Noah invited the antediluvians into his. To come by baptism into the visible church is unquestionably a duty; but to invite you to come into this national or that national, or this Congregational or that Wesleyan, communion, is not necessarily to invite you into this ark. Our invitation is to come into that true church, members of which are in every communion upon earth; the head of which is Christ; the bonds, the ties, the links of which are ties of living and imperishable love; the safety of which is guaranteed by the oath and made real by the overshadowing attributes of Deity; and the end and the destiny of which is so sure that no convulsion can arrest it, no change retard it. This church must last and live, whilst there is a God to be worshipped, throughout the ages of eternity.

The ark which Noah built after the prescription of God, had but one door in it; and Noah stood at that door, and invited all that would to come in. What is that door? It is not baptism; that cannot be proved. It is not any right prescription or position in this world; that cannot be shown. But we have One proclaiming himself to be the only door to the sheepfold—the only avenue of access to the number of the saved: “I am the door; whoso entereth by me shall find pasture.” Hence the title of admission into this true church of the redeemed is not any visible ceremony; nor is it any earthly name, however valued, esteemed, and cherished it may be; nor is it in the power of any priest, nor is it in virtue of any rite; it is simply the reception of, or belief in, the Lord Jesus Christ, as God’s way to us, and our way exclusively to him;—and that minister of the gospel who cannot point out this door without obstructing and narrowing it, or who cannot stand before it and invite the people in without casting his own shadow on it, is not true to all the requirements and responsibilities of his office; and that sermon, therefore, seems to me the most useful, not which pleases the ear with its music, but

which casts the greatest light and the least shadow upon Christ, the only door of access to the company of the saved.

This ark, constructed after the prescription of God, had not only a door, but also "a window;" and it is remarkable that it had but one window—for God himself said, "A window shalt thou make in it;" and the height and breadth of that window God himself laid down. Now what a window is to that ark, it is not surely straining our interpretation if I presume, the ministry and sacraments and ordinances of the church are to the church. What was the best window that Noah could have had in the ark? Surely not the most beautiful one—not the one that was most richly and most exquisitely stained; but the window that would subserve the great purposes which he had in view, that which admitted with the least obstruction the light of heaven to the inmates. It is so with the ministry and the ordinances of the church of Christ. That is the best ministry which is the purest medium of light; the best light is not the "dim religious," but the bright religious light; and those sacraments seem to me the most scriptural and the most apostolical,

which are administered, so as not to take the place of Christ, and dislodge him, but to be the transparent and lucid media through which the beams of heaven dawn upon the earth, and the light of God's truth finds the most ready access into the depths of man's heart.

While the ark had its door and its window, it had in it also several compartments; these compartments were divided by partitions. Is there not in this something like a symbol—if not a description—of the state of Christ's church? Those true believers who compose it may be found in every communion; and each has a preference, it may be, distinct from his brother's. These distinctions may be sinful—but they are facts; these differences may be expedient, or they may not; they may be necessary and unavoidable, or they may be criminal; but here they are. Men do not yet see eye to eye; whether they shall ever see all things exactly the same, is a question I cannot answer; but here there is a palpable fact, that if there were different chambers in the ark, there was but one door of access to all, and one window to give light to them all. May it not be so in Christ's church?—nay, it is so,—whatever be the Christian party, or deno-

mination (and one compartment may be ampler and brighter than another) to which you belong, there is but one door of admission to the true church; there is but one window to let light into it; and that sect seems to me to depart farthest from the gospel, that says, "You shall not belong to us, unless you first enter through Cranmer, or Wesley, or Knox, and then through Christ;" while that church seems to me to approach nearest to the apostolic model, that proclaims and writes, as it were, on its very threshold — "There is nothing requisite for your admission, but your sense of your peril without, and your desire to be saved solely through His precious blood."

In this ark the three great fathers of the human family met together: Shem, the great father of Asia, Japhet of Europe, and Ham of Africa, — America being made up of sections taken from each. How delightful the anticipation, that their children shall meet again in Christ, their common Saviour, and in the true ark, their common church! and how earnestly should we endeavour to approximate to this predestined state in all our arrangements upon earth! How very unlike this is a portion of the church in the

Southern States of America, where the black man, because he has got a darker shade upon his face, is not allowed to approach the same table or sit in the same pew with the white man!

All within the ark, and they alone, were saved. No doubt there were stronger ships built than Noah's, and yet they all perished. Tested by strict mathematical, or hydrostatic, or hydraulic principles, the ark was a very defective vessel; I have no doubt scientific men prophesied that it would founder in the first wave that rose; and I dare say that when Noah entered the ark, without any knowledge of the stars, and without any chart or compass, or means of navigating it, they predicted that if his prophecy became true, and the Flood came, those magnificent war vessels would float unscathed to the remotest shores, and that the miserable shell which Noah called the ark would perish in the first gale. But the mightiest navies foundered before the overwhelming Flood; and the very shell constructed by Noah, who was neither shipwright nor carpenter, survived;—teaching us the lesson, that the element of safety is not the strength of human institutions, but the presence and blessing of God upon the weakest.

Kings and nobles, the highest, the greatest, the richest, all that were outside the ark, perished ! they only inside were safe. And so it must be still. The church that is to last for ever is not the most gorgeous in its forms, or the richest in its possessions ; and they that trust to the antiquity, or the greatness, or the learning, or the resources of the church, as the great means of their safety in the approaching storms, imitate the conduct of those who trusted to their war-ships, and rejected the safety provided in the ark of Noah. Our safety is not in our belonging to a church the most apostolic, nor is it in our being baptized after a *formula* the most scriptural ; the only church, to belong to which is to be a churchman indeed, and a Christian too, is that composed of those who have “ washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” and have fled to Christ, as the only safety and refuge of sinners.

Many assisted in building the ark of Noah who perished themselves. It is not likely that Noah could have built the whole ark in the time prescribed. It is found by calculation, that Noah’s ark, by measurement, would be as large as several, I believe, of the largest ships of war,

and able to carry as much as twenty war-ships, guns, crews, and all. It is not likely, therefore, that Noah could have built it all himself. I have no doubt that he was assisted by numbers, for the pay they received, not because of any sympathy they felt. Many of the shibboleths that are sounded loudest in the age in which we live, do not come from zeal for the cause of Christ, but from zeal for men's own advantage. Every time we hear, "The church, the church of the Lord are we," or every time we hear, "The church is in danger," or "The chapel is in peril," we cannot believe that these always proceed from the purest and the loftiest motives. Many side with the church, on the one hand, or with dissent, upon the other, not from heartfelt preference, but from expediency and meaner ends. And it is to be feared very many may assist in extending the cause of Christ on the earth, who shall not be saved by it. It is a very solemn thing, that there will be ministers who shall form and build up churches for eternity, who shall perish themselves; that many shall contribute to raise schools, and to circulate Bibles, and to extend missions, out of benevolent motives—not out of Christian ones, who

are not Christians themselves. When we give to the cause of Christ, let us always precede that gift by this first and chiefest question, "Do I belong to Christ myself? Am I a Christian myself?" He only who is a Christian can give truly to the extension of Christ's cause; and the little that he gives, being the most that he can spare, will be blessed by Him who gave him grace to do so.

The same wave which raised the ark of Noah to the sky, overwhelmed the towers and the citadels of the earth. The same gospel that is "a savour of life unto life" to many, is "the savour of death unto death" to others. It is a great law in God's providence, just as it is a law in God's grace, that what is death to the unbeliever is salvation to the child of God; the same sermon that carries quickening hopes into one heart, carries a hardening process into a second; the same tribulation that is sanctified to one man, hardens a second; for the same wave that carried Noah nearer to his God, overwhelmed those that were without the ark in irresistible destruction; the same lightning flash that rent the rocks and citadels of the world, only shone upon the surging waters before Noah, and illuminated

his troubled pathway, till he rested finally upon Ararat. Let us, then, pray that the gospel we hear may be made a blessing to us, not a calamity—that the truth we know may be the means of our acquittal, not the cause of our condemnation, at the judgment-seat of Christ.

We and our children are invited, just as Noah and his children, and all his family, were invited into the ark.

There is nothing to be done now, but simply to accept what has been done for us. The great misapprehension of many is, that they have something to do, or something to suffer, before they can be justified. Now the revelation of the gospel of Christ is, that all has been done that God required to be done, all suffered that the law demanded to be suffered, and that now we have only to repose upon that sacrifice, and receive that righteousness, and be everlastingly saved; what we are called upon to do, is just what Noah was called upon to do—to bring not only ourselves, but our children, to Christ, and just as they are.

Has any one a prodigal son? Bring him upon your prayers to a throne of grace; beseech Him in whose hands are all hearts, to change that

heart; and that prodigal will yet gratify your spirits, by presenting the spectacle of one prostrate at his Father's footstool, and that Father falling on his neck, and kissing him, and bidding him welcome home. Have you infants? Bring them into the ark also; let these flowers be presented before "the Sun of righteousness;" let these babes be dedicated to Christ, and be taught to feel that their safety is to be within the ark—their peril to be out of it.

There is no safety for us or for our children anywhere but in the true church of the redeemed, that is, washed in the blood and arrayed in the righteousness of Jesus. This one thought should absorb or annihilate every other consideration. Be not anxious so much whether your offspring shall be churchmen or dissenters, as whether they shall be Christians. Bring them first to Christ, and then they will not go to a wrong church; make them first acquainted with the excellencies of the Saviour, and then they will prefer the communion that reflects his glory most brightly, and makes known his gospel most faithfully; carry your children first to the ark, and then let them determine at their leisure in which chamber or partition of the ark they shall

prefer permanently to dwell,—recollecting that if we are in the true ark, there is but one door for admission, but one window to enlighten us, as there is but one God to protect us, and one mountain, more glorious than Ararat, on which we shall rest and dwell for ever.

But it may be asked, “What is to become of those children who are not so privileged as Noah’s, in having a father to bring them to Christ, or into the true ark?” In such a case a Christian church is the sponsor for these out-cast ones. The duty—nay, not the duty, but the privilege—devolves upon us of “suffering such little ones to come to Jesus.” Those children that wander in our streets, who are our future housebreakers, the inmates of our prisons for the next twenty years, and the exiles to Botany Bay, are not poisonous weeds—they are only soiled and trampled flowers; we need only to gather them up, to bring them beneath the beams of the everlasting Sun, and under the rains of the sky, and they will bloom and beautify the land which they now threaten to discredit or destroy.

To these children we must give not merely a secular education, but also, and emphatically, a

religious education. Secular education without scriptural is giving power, but adding no principle to regulate that power : it is like building ships of the most approved construction, but forgetting or neglecting to put on board a compass and a chart, and to append to each ship a helm ; and then letting these vessels float upon the ocean, where they must founder in the first hurricane. We teach the young secular knowledge, because it is useful, important, nay, necessary to do so ; but we teach them, contemporaneously, the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, which not only beautifies and regulates the other, but “ opens ” for them “ the kingdom of heaven,” as “ for all believers.”

Some, notwithstanding, are advocates for teaching secular knowledge only. I have always felt great pity for the schoolmaster who is placed in a school and told — “ Now teach everything upon earth, but do not meddle with religion ; ” and I have often thought of the difficulties in which he must be placed. Suppose the master, for instance, is explaining botany to his school. He selects a rose, and begins to tell the children that it belongs to such a class, or to such a genus, and has such a property—such fragrance,

such virtues ; he then begins to tell them that it is a favourite symbol with poets, and adds also that it is associated with the history of England—the white and red roses of the houses of York and Lancaster ; he then begins to tell them that it is used also in a book called the Bible, and in that book it describes the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Rose of Sharon. Up starts one of the boys—“ Hold, sir ; I am a Jew ; I do not believe in such a Saviour, and I cannot admit of such an application.” Or I can imagine him describing the origin of books—what they were made of—first leaves, next parchment on a roller ; and then he begins to tell his scholars that the Bible is so called as being *The Book*, the best book in the world. Up starts a sceptic child—“ My father does not believe the Bible, and I do not believe it ; you are violating the rules of the school.” Now, I ask, must not such a teacher be placed in a very awkward situation ? He may speak of every book, from the book of Jasher down to the books of Mormon,—but he must not speak one word concerning the Bible ; he may mention every illustrious person, from Noah down to Napoleon,—but he dare not speak of Him who

hallowed the very universe with his glory—the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is difficult to conceive secular education conveyed in schools separate from religious education. I do not wish the mere sectarianism of religion to be taught; let the Bible be the school-book, and I am satisfied; let the Bible be the great Directory in the school, and it seems to me to be enough.

We are not against teaching secular knowledge. Far from it. Many persons err in this respect. They teach their children the way to heaven, but do not teach them the duties and responsibilities of earth. Many parents educate their children as if they had nothing to do with the world, but to get over it like skaters upon thin ice, as rapidly as they can, in order to be sure at length to be in heaven. Now it seems to me, that we must educate our children for this world, as well as for heaven; not for the adoption of the world's maxims, or for the imitation of the world's example, but for the discharge of the world's duties. We must teach our children, by all means, to pray, to read, to come to the house of God, to visit the throne of grace; and fit them, by the grace of God, for

the house of God in glory;—but we must also prepare them for the counter, and for the exchange, and for the army, and for the navy,—for they have to fulfil responsibilities in the world, as well as to prepare for heaven; they have duties to discharge to Cæsar, as well as privileges to receive from Christ. The child that gets a wrong view of the world, is as likely to make shipwreck as the child that receives a wrong view of heaven. The world is the great battle-field, on which the conflict is to be sustained: the shop, the exchange, the army, the navy, the parliament, are the places where our character is to be tested; and unless we are made acquainted with all that is before us in the world, and all that we are to do and dare and conquer, we have not that “faith” which “overcomes the world,” and which is made perfect in fruition. Therefore we wish to teach both knowledges combined, because we believe both to be necessary.

There are but two modes of treatment of the rising generation—namely, the prevention of the crime or the punishment of the criminal. One or other we must adopt. Surely it is painful to see children before a magistrate, at the police

offices, who were really never taught the vast distinctions between vice and virtue, between holiness and sin, but have been allowed to grow up in the belief, that it is their duty to enrich themselves at their neighbours' expense; and then they are punished for principles which have been ingrafted on their earliest recollections, and which have been taught them beneath the shelter and authority of a mother's home. We ought to prevent the growth of the juvenile criminal, rather than punish the full-grown and matured criminal; we ought to exercise the privilege of prevention rather than the stern duty of punishment; and in doing so we should not only fall in with the prescriptions of the gospel more fully, but we should leave upon society an impression more permanent and more valuable. It would be more economical to do so. We pay so much for poor's rates, and police tax, and for gaols, just because we feel so little interest and do so little for the instruction of the rising race. If the schoolmaster do not lay hold of that poor child in St. Giles's, a policeman will lay hold of him; if we do not place him in a Christian school, we shall find him in Newgate; if we were to give more for the main-

tenance of Christian schools, we should be taxed much less for gaols, and all the punitive apparatus with which our country is furnished.

Where is property most valuable because most safe? Where should we prefer to leave an estate for the maintenance of our children? Would it not be in this country? How much was Lot's house worth in Sodom, into which the rabble were ready to burst every moment? How much was property worth in France, at the time of the Revolution? How comes it to pass that the barren acres of Scotland will fetch more than the fertile fields of Mahometan Turkey? The answer is, because Christian education has made a visible impression upon the one, while the other is completely overrun with ignorance and superstition. But I will not dwell upon such grounds: I put the matter upon the highest ground of all. Train children for Christ; prepare their hearts for immortality and glory; transplant them from a soil in which they wither, to a soil in which they will grow and prosper. Bring them from the waters of the swelling flood into communion with the people of God

CHAPTER XIII.

ARARAT ; OR, THE FIRST MORNING OF A NEW DAY.

“The wave is breaking on the shore,
The echo fading from the chime,
Again the shadow moveth o'er
The dial-plate of time.

“Oh! in that dying year hath been
The sum of all since time began ;
The birth and death, the joy and pain,
Of nature and of man.”

“And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD ; and took of every clean
beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”
—GEN. viii. 20.

NOAH, a member of the Church before the Flood, commemorated the past and commenced the future by a religious act. He owned God in the end, as he had owned him in the beginning of his peculiar, and, as he thought at first, his perilous career. God with Noah was not a mere speculative idea that floated in his head, but an ever present, ever plastic, ever consolatory conviction ; he began his voyage with God, he ended it in worship and adoration to God.

As Noah ended one world and began another, we should end one year and begin the next. A year is the epitome of an age; an age is the expansion of a year; and both ought to be made by us, as they were meant to be by Him who created them, subservient to the highest, the holiest, and the most beneficent of ends. End, therefore, each year, and begin its successor, as you would wish to end this life, and to begin the next. Let the last notes of praise in 1852 mingle with the first notes of prayer for 1853. Let us close great epochs as we would wish to close the grand epoch. Time is the porch of eternity,—the pathway to a crown of glory, or to an heirdom of misery and sorrow and grief. He must be blind indeed, who has not seen God's hand sweep along the currents of the year that is gone; and he must be deaf indeed, who has not heard his voice upon the right and upon the left, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" and he must be insensible and hardened indeed, who, having closed one year without God, can risk, or dare, or venture to commence and continue its successor in defiance of God. Beautifully, then, did Noah close the world that passed away with solemn worship; most ap-

propriately did he commence an unsounded world, into whose ups and downs, and heights and depths, his weary feet were soon to go, by seeking Him to be with him in the future, lighting it up with the love which had been with him in the past, superintending him by his paternal and benevolent care.

But, in looking at this act of Noah, which closed one epoch and commenced another, let us try to ascertain what was the first feeling that it expressed. No doubt it was thanksgiving, adoration, and praise. Ararat was to Noah a standing monument that God's overshadowing wings had been over him upon the stormy deep, that God's fatherly eye had been fastened upon these little, often doubting, but still safe voyagers! And as he thought that the same Flood that was the grave of a vast world, was the preservation of his little family; surely it became him, it was worthy of him as a Christian, for such he was, to offer thanksgiving and praise to Him who had kept his eyes from tears, his ark from foundering, and placed him on Ararat, a monument of preserving goodness. New-year's day is the Ararat of Christians still. It is that day on which we stand and look back on all the way

that God has guided us ; and from whose summit, as it were, we may look forward ; and if we have fears, and faintings, and dim and sad prospects, we need have no misgivings ; because 1853 is as naked before our God as 1852, and he that poured the one from his hand, and has taken it again to himself, is pouring forth the other for us, to carry us a stage nearer to himself. And as we look back from each Ararat, the first day of a new year, upon the past, we can see rocks as Noah did, and debris and fragments of barks and disorganized things ; but we can see what Noah also saw, the green grass that begins again to grow, and the young flowers that begin again to bloom ; and around its awful brow, girdling it with fresh glory and grand riches, the rainbow, the memorial of a God at peace with mankind, and mankind accepted and blessed in covenant with him. Have we, then, standing where we now are, no mercies, like Noah, to commemorate ? Have we no God to praise for the past ? have we no Ararat that prompts that praise ? If we are this day in health, and some in prosperity, and all in safety, to whom do we give the praise ? Do we praise the ship that carried us, the skill of the crew

that manned it, the winds and the waves, as the heathen do? or do we praise the love and faithfulness of that God who controls the archangel that is next his throne, and takes care of the meanest reptile that was admitted into the ark, as Christians should? Let God have all the praise for the last year, let him have our hearts' complete confidence for the coming one. I say, like Noah, we may have much to deplore in the past, and much that we could wish were not swept away by the past; but we have never been deserted by Him who remembered Noah, and has always remembered us. As with Noah, many a fair possession may have been swept away by the waves of 1852; like Noah, we may have to deplore many a green field laid below its flood, many a fair fabric shattered by its throes; like Noah, we may have to weep for many a near and dear one snatched away, and buried beneath the floods of the past; though we can cherish, what he could not perhaps concerning many he knew, the hopes of a sure and a certain resurrection. We may have to deplore many bright lights that once gladdened the horizon now quenched and extinguished for ever; we may have to lament gaps in our homes, va-

cancies in the circle of our friends, heavier hearts as the years put upon them their increasing load; but still, if we be under the overshadowing wings of God, the wave that has swept away what we most loved, has only carried us, as it bore Noah, nearer to the God that took them. And every shock that we have felt has been paternal,—it was the wave, not the rock,—and every anxiety we have felt has been unfounded, and every dispensation has been mercy. And who does not feel, that our most anxious moments have been our most sanctifying moments? so that each can say, in his sober and solemn moments, that affliction was bitter indeed while it was borne, but it was good for me nevertheless that I was afflicted; and though no tribulation for the present seemeth joyous, yet it has been working out the peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto us who have been exercised thereby. And have we not discovered long ago, what we all find sooner or later, and what we are so reluctant to believe until we do find it, that all things work for good to them who love God? I believe that if every true Christian were to speak his mind, he would say, in taking a retrospect of the past, There is

not one thing that has occurred in it, however bitter it tasted at the moment, however painfully I felt it, however much I repined, I would wish to be left out of my lot ; or one single thing to be reversed in the way of suffering or bereavement, of losses or crosses, in God's good providence. And what is this, but the human heart uttering the testimony from its silent and its solemn depths, that " all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose ;" and when we said, all these things are against us, as thought the patriarch who first uttered it, we little knew all these things were working directly for us.

We have thus looked at Noah's offering, closing a world that was gone, and commencing a world that has come, as eucharistic or thanksgiving offering. But it was more than this. If it had been merely a thanksgiving offering, he would have taken of the fruits and the flowers of the earth, and offered them to God ; but he took of every clean beast, and offered it to God, and that was an evidence that it was an expiatory or atoning sacrifice. And did Noah need such ? Do we need it ? That is the right way to put

the question, and if our own hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. Noah recollected sins in the past, misgivings in the present; many a fear that he had entertained, many a doubt that he had spiritually felt. He recollected how often he had said in his heart, when some huge billow swept past, or some great wave made his frail bark vibrate with its shock, or reel and stagger, as if his vessel had lost its way on the deep, God hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me; and like the Israelites in another case, It had been better for me and mine, that we had perished with the rest of the antediluvians in the Flood, than to be thus subjected to fears and fightings without, and only to perish in the end. When he stood on Ararat, and recollected all his doubts of God, his sad misgivings, his dark suspicions, all his fears, his first feeling was, I need the cleansing of a blood that will cleanse from all sin; I need to flee to an atonement in which alone there can be forgiveness for the past, and through which alone I can have strength, and peace, and confidence for the future. When we look back upon the year that has passed away, have we not similar recollections? I do

believe, that not the least sin that Christians commit is that of suspecting God. The last thing that we let go—it is very strange indeed, but it is so—after grace has changed the heart, is that innate suspicion of God, which is just the projected shadow of Adam's falling from God, and repeating itself among the traces of the primal ruin, in the 19th century, in the hearts of mankind. We go too often to the throne of grace, as to that of an avenging Being, whose wrath we have to deprecate; we go to a communion table with fears, and doubtings, and misgivings, feeling that it is a very awful and terrible thing; and we listen to the gospel as if it were a dreadful knell; so much so, that in our counting-houses, in our shops, in our various professions, the idea of God coming vividly before us would be felt by many to be a very intrusive thing. Now I ought to feel, when about my business, as I should when I am praying, or preaching, or reading. The service of God is not simply prayer, praise, reading. These are the nutriment of what constitutes the service of God. The service of God is behind the counter, in the warehouses, in the parliament, in the law courts. There

man is to show himself the servant of God ; and in the sanctuary he obtains and gathers that manna on the one day of the week, which forms strength and nutriment to him during all the days that follow. But is not our idea of God too often that of dread ? Are not our feelings towards him oft those of suspicion ? and when we find things turn out better than we expected, when we find that what we feared in criminal distrust comes to be the greatest mercy that dawned upon us, we are justly ashamed, for never do we see the shadows of sin so sharp and clear in their outlines, as when they are seen in the light of unmerited and unexpected goodness. It is when we stand on the Ararat where God's goodness has placed us, that we see how sinful were our past misgivings, how grievous were our short-comings. A man never repents most heartily, until he repents of sin, amidst the enjoyment of unexpected mercy. Man will not repent aright on Mount Gerizim, he will not repent heartily on Mount Ebal ; but when he kneels on Calvary, and sees his sin in the light of God's transcendent benevolence and love, he looks up, and, like Peter, goes forth and weeps bitterly. Many a time, during

the year that has passed away, have we mistrusted God. Something happened to you—you put a bad construction upon it. Some unexpected dispensation overtook you—you instinctively said, This is wrath, not mercy. Some trial you were perhaps placed in, and during it you had recourse to everything and anything, and anybody, except God.

We must say of 1852, “ We have left undone what we ought to have done, and we have done what we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. Enter not into judgment, O Lord, with thy servants; for in thy sight no man living can be justified. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” There is pardon for the past, complete, entire, irreversible; there is peace and hope for the future, because thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

We have shown, that Noah’s sacrifice was not simply eucharistic, but expiatory, “ Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” Far more privileged are we than Noah; he had his sacrifice to slay, we have our sacrifice already slain; he had to make atonement, through which he looked for for-

givenness ; we have only to accept an atonement already perfect and complete. In other words, Noah had to prepare his sacrifice ; we have to thank God for one prepared ; and to hear, echoing along the centuries, incapable of being spent or silenced, those grand words with which the great sacrifice closed, "It is finished." And if we have a sacrifice near to every one ; if it costs us nothing, is accessible to all, available to us ; it will be much more criminal, if, on this, the Ararat between the years, as Noah's was between the worlds, we do not have recourse to that only sacrifice, and seek forgiveness for the past, and guidance for the future. Let Christ, the Altar, be our Ararat for 1853 ; let his atonement be our plea ; let his mercies be our trust ; and let his all-prevailing intercession be the smoke and the incense of that sacrifice, ever available for us, and even for the chiefest of sinners. We rest every Christmas between the years ; let us pray that the past, which cannot be recalled, may be pardoned ; and the future, which is yet pure, innocent, and unstained, may be charged by us, through God's grace, with a mission that shall bless mankind, and give glory to Him who is our dwelling-place in all genera-

tions. Let us enter on each coming year, as Noah entered on his new world, with praise for the past, and prayer for pardon ; confidence for the future, and close walking with God. 1853 has just emerged from the waters of past years, yet beautiful, ruddy, and like a giant, ready to run its race. Let us approach it from the altar, let us enter on it by a new and a living way. Let us walk along its channels with God, as Noah walked ; and at its close, if it close upon us, we shall have, like Noah, to praise and thank Him who has kept us throughout. What shall be the character of the year that comes ? We cannot determine. No horoscope of man's can cast it ; no penetration of political sagacity can ascend it ; what new features it will develope, what strange and mysterious currents will rush along its bed, what cataracts and convulsions will take place before it is closed, whither it will bear humanity, to what destiny it shall carry the ark of God, we know not ; God only knows. But let us enter on it, trusting on the God who is in it ; let us, in the language of the apostle, to vary the figure which I have employed, "let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of

our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And we are perfectly sure, come storm, come tempest, come convulsion, come the dislocation of all things, come war, come invasion, come rebellion, come what may, a Christian is just as safe as Noah was in the ark—"Nothing shall separate us from the love of God, that is in Jesus Christ our Lord." But whilst we have the consciousness of this safety, let us look to the coming year as suggesting to us grave responsibilities. The evening twilight of 1852 is now mingling with the morning twilight of 1853. The waters of the past and the waters of the future, the former to their resting-place, the latter to their origin, meet together where we now are. The old year has laid down its burden at God's throne, and the new year has come to occupy its place. Let us, then, look at the coming year as a scene of duty, as an opportunity of privilege, a series of responsibilities, which never, never can be exhausted. Seize the golden seconds; moments now may be the fathers of an endless eternity. The year that is coming may be the fulcrum on which everlast-

ing joy or everlasting sorrow vibrates, in reference to some one whose heart now bounds, and who looks and feels as healthy as the healthiest among mankind. This year may be to us the full tide;—lose it, and you are lost for ever. It may be the seed-time of eternity;—miss it, and the harvest comes, and there are only thorns to gather, instead of golden wheat. While a sense of past sin, therefore, humbles us, while a sense of the vanity of the past saddens us, let us take courage for the future; and, in God's strength, and guided by God's word, enter upon it, to meet its doubts, and to avail ourselves of its privileges; and then to live will be Christ, and to die will be great gain. And what a solemn thought is this, now we have been spared during one year, that the present may be our last. What a very solemn thought; we may have entered on a year, the close of which we shall not see. It has now opened upon us joyously; it has dawned upon our firesides, upon our homes; on our palaces, on our counting-houses, on our various duties, excitements, responsibilities; but how it shall close, God only knows. Its current may be carrying soon the dead dust of some one to its

resting-place, and the quickened soul of some one to the judgment-seat of God. Can we avert its worst issues? In God's strength, because invited by God's word, we can; and therefore we may now determine, that this year shall close upon us in benedictions; and that, whether we shall see it end below, as hearers in the sanctuary upon earth, or whether we shall find it end in eternity, inmates of the world to come, we may resolve, by the grace of God, that it shall find us, if living, living to Christ, if taken away, found in him, not having our own righteousness, but his, and standing amid them who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

While thus we call to mind the goodness of the years that are past; and render to God, to whom it is due, a tribute of thanksgiving for all the blessings that he has mingled with them, let us enter on the coming year, the end of which we cannot see, in God's strength; availing ourselves of every privilege, and accepting every duty; running the race set before us, looking to Jesus. When Noah looked back from Ararat upon the past, no doubt he rejoiced that while the Flood swept away much

that was so beautiful, and buried in its deep waters many that were to him so dear; yet he felt that it had not swept away one real, spiritual privilege which God had given him. He felt still, that his God, his altar, his religion, his worship, all were left behind unscathed, as real, as available, as when Adam walked in Paradise, the unfallen. And cannot we, likewise, say the same, amid all the scenes that have passed over us during the last four years? Notwithstanding revolutions, counter-revolutions, coups d'état, and the breaking up of kingdoms and thrones, and the setting up of presidential chairs and empires;—notwithstanding all that has happened in the religious world, all that has occurred in the political world; famine and plague, and changes, and judgments, and changes, ceaseless, one upon another, like the waves of the sea; yet, how delightful, not one privilege of ours has been swept away from us! Our Bible remains, the floods have not touched it; and no man's shadow, be it the shadow of priest or pope, may be cast upon that page against my will, when I am called upon by my Father to read his message to me. And there remains not only our Bible, but, scarcely less

precious, our privilege and freedom of worship. There are lands on the other side of the sea, where the wretched tyranny and despotism of by-gone days is scattering the Christian congregations, and driving forth from the soil men who have the courage to fear God, and who assert their right—a right which it is, has been, and will be—to worship Him in their own way, in spirit and in truth. Many a fair assemblage of Christians has been scattered, and many more, from what I know, will be scattered, before the year is done. But how precious, that the chimes of sabbath bells still echo in the ear of England! How delightful it is, what ground for gratitude, that we can still, under our own vine and our own fig-tree, worship God with none to make us afraid. Let us, therefore, grieve less for the losses we have sustained, and think more thankfully of the blessings that remain; and we will praise God with warmer hearts, and a richer song, than ever we have praised him before. And whatever the floods have swept away, the throne of grace still remains. Neither the autocrat on his throne, nor any other power, can touch that Divine throne, that remains for ever the throne of grace, and at which the humblest

beggar is as welcome with his petition, as the greatest monarch that sways the sceptre, or that wears a crown. And the Saviour remains, still accessible, still beseeching, still pleading. His blood has lost nothing of its efficacy; his love has not lost anything of its fervour; he is now ready to receive, to bless, and to make happy, me, and you, and all that will humble themselves to bow at his footstool, and take blessings without paying for them, without money and without price. And the Comforter still remains. If comforts have been taken from you, the Comforter remains. If streamlets have dried midst summer's heat, or have been frozen by winter's cold, the grand and inexhaustible fountain still remains. No man can be sad for whom God the Comforter still is; and no man can be really happy, to whom the Comforter is a stranger; and he who has this Comforter, in the loss of every outward comfort, may say, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no more herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Thus while we look back upon each year, that like a world has passed away, and while we look forward and purpose in reference to each coming year, that, like an untrodden world, is yet to be, let us learn these plain lessons from all we have been speaking of. See the safety of the people of God. There is no man who will not be rocked, or driven, or overwhelmed by the wave, unless he be found in Christ Jesus. And what do I mean by this expression? It is a theological expression, some will say; it means, dear reader, that your heart's trust, life, hope, aspirations, confidence for the future, and conviction of forgiveness for the past, all rest upon one, and that one the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world. And if you are one of his, by being clothed in his righteousness, by being animated by his Holy Spirit, showing that this is real, by reflecting his character before mankind, then it is true of you, that neither life nor death, nor things past, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thus the safety of the people of God is contingent, not upon anything in their life, but simply upon this, that they have taken Christ for their Saviour, and given themselves to him, as the subjects of his salvation.

Let us rejoice in our sense of safety, such as I have now stated, real and well founded indeed ; it is not fanaticism, nor enthusiasm, nor delusion, but a solemn, calm, earnest truth, that a man who is a Christian never can perish. "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand." You may be tossed as Noah was, you may have fears, and fightings, and misgivings ; but, blessed be God, our safety, and the permanence of that safety, is not contingent upon the strength of our faith, or the pressure of our fears, but upon the strength of his arm that leads us, and upon the surety and faithfulness of a promise-keeping and faithful God. But, whilst we are thus safe in this consciousness of shelter, we may, and if Christians we must, often long for rest. It was not sinful in Noah to say within himself, I wish that the fountains of the great deep were shut ; I wish that the windows of heaven were closed ; I wish that this weary tossing on the sea—and

those who have made long voyages by sea know its weariness—I wish that this weary tossing on the sea, the more weary to me because a landsman, and consequently more unaccustomed to it, was ended. That was the natural instinct of the human heart, not forbidden or repudiated by the regenerated heart: and so we in this world may long for deliverance; there is no sin in longing for that day when the groans of creation shall cease; and the great storm-queller shall come forth from the holy place and wave his hand over all creation, and there shall be a great and a lasting calm. I do not say that it is natural to long for death; I have often felt death is a most unnatural thing; and I cannot believe that any human being longs for death; but what a Christian longs for is, that true rest, that perfect sunshine, that complete exemption from cares and fears, that perfect knowledge of all mysteries, that uninterrupted communion with the Fountain of all peace, which we know shall be, and for which we are to wait, and wait patiently, and be still. While looking for it, and anticipating it, we may say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; we may say, Why tarry his chariot wheels? Even the ransomed

saints plead, Lord, Lord, how long? And we too may long and wish for the advent of that day, when the Sun of righteousness shall rise and shine from his meridian throne. All are willing to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, for the sake of what is beyond it; and death, to a Christian, after all is not dying. I believe that Christ's death has quite altered death in the case of the true believer. The Bible speaks of the valley of the shadow of death; there never can be a shadow to an object unless there be a strong light upon that object; and the stronger the light upon the object, the more strong and dense is its shadow. Now, when we speak of the shadow of death, it means death in the light of the Sun of righteousness, and therefore there is a shadow but just because there is light. All that remains is death's shadow; just as the shadow of the moon coming between the sun and the earth, rests upon us, but the moon itself is far distant. So death destroyed, removed, put away, has a shadow, to let us know that he is. But that shadow is the evidence to us that Christ has overcome him, and that we are no more to fear him as a formidable and a terrible opponent.

And thus we may long for that millennial bliss, when all things shall be made new ; and the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, waiting to be delivered, shall be restored to its pristine harmony ; and the very brutes that now quarrel with each other shall lie down in peace and quiet among themselves, and in obedience to man, into whose hands the reins shall be replaced, and the sceptre and the government of this world, all under Christ.

Let us learn that not only is God within the church, keeping all in peace there, but he is outside the church, restraining all there ; God was not only in Noah's ark, maintaining peace within, but God was outside Noah's ark, meting out the wind and the storm, and regulating all for the safety of that ark. And so now, our Father is not only in the church, the Lord of the church ; but he is outside the church, the Lord of the wind, the storm, and hurricane, the revolution, and the tempest ; and he will restrain man's wrath, and he will make the remainder of that wrath to praise and magnify himself. Never, then, let us forget, that, while God is in the midst of us, to bless us and to teach us, and to protect us, that he is

outside also ; that he has not given the world up to this or that chance regulation, but that he is still superintending it, and causing all things outside the ark to keep it on its way, and all things to prepare for that grand festival, when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and the bride shall have made herself ready.

Let us also remember that, as the time draws near, God will multiply signs of deliverance. The nearer that Noah was to Ararat, the more the signs multiplied that he was so. He sent out the raven—it left him. He sent out the dove, and it returned ; and again he sent it out, and it returned with an olive branch in its mouth ; and his mind thus grew in certainty, that the waters were subsiding, just in proportion as they subsided. Even so, as the time of our deliverance draws near, God will give signs to his people that it is so, in the increased expectancy that rises like a sea of peace within them ; in the joyous hopes that steal like lights into the chambers of the soul, kindled from heavenly altars ; in a sense of communion and reconciliation with God ; in the growing intensity of their looking for Him who will come the second time without sin unto salvation ; and in the consoli-

dating spiritual interests, and the marshalling separate forces for that great day of trial, which the world may laugh at, but which is unmistakeably prophesied in his word. And all things are mustering—Romanism for its last battle—all its scattered powers consolidating; and the true people of God also are concentrating their forces—all that love the Lord Jesus Christ thinking more of the grand truths on which they agree, and thinking less of the minor discrepancies about which they differ. And when that last conflict comes,—a conflict for which it becomes us all to prepare; every man being ready to give a reason for the faith that is in him, and willing and waiting to suffer and to sacrifice in the defence of that faith,—we know what the issue will be; there, as in every other issue, there is no doubt of the ultimate victory. There is no risk of the ascendancy of falsehood and superstition. I believe that real religion, where it does not spread visibly to the eye, is striking its roots deeper and deeper into the individual hearts; the nearer that crisis comes which we all anticipate, the more decided will men be for God their only ally above, his truth their only life below; and willing, having a mar-

tyr's spirit, to die, if needs be, a martyr's death for Christ's sake.

In the last place, the ark was not Noah's home. It was not his rest. He took it as a temporary dwelling-place, for a temporary purpose. He longed for the rest to which it was to conduct him. This is not our rest—let us never imagine, that this world is any more the resting-place to us, than the battle field is to the soldier, or the deck upon the tempest-tossed sea is to the sailor. This is not our rest; we must not settle down in it as if it were; we must not work for it as if it were the ultimate and the grand thing: we must merely pass through it, gathering the incidental flower, while we thank the God who gives that flower its beauty and its perfume; but not rest here, as if it were the final home of the people of God. Our hearts and our trust must be beyond the sky—our home is where Christ is, and it will be when Christ comes, and no where else.

As sure as God kept Noah for Ararat, to enter upon a world that he had again to water with his tears, and to fertilize with the sweat of his brow, so sure God will keep us for the better rest, the everlasting hills of the heavenly Jerusalem. We

are kept, says the apostle, by faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time ; and God's blessing upon the new earth, after its baptism by fire, will be a far richer blessing than that which was pronounced upon the old world after its baptism by water. His former blessing was that he would not curse it any more, that "seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease;" that he would not deluge it again with another flood of waters. But his blessing upon the new world, which comes forth under the new Genesis, is thus unfolded : " I saw no temple therein, the tabernacle of God is with man, and he shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Beautiful prospect ! this life of ours is the dream, that future is the reality. Let us sit loose to things that perish in the using ; let us set our hearts and affections upon things that endure for ever and for ever. Ye that tremble, " Be still, and know that I am God." Take with you into 1853, which may be a year of storm, convulsion, cataract, and trouble,

this magnificent hymn, and may the Spirit of God help you to realize it: " God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved, and though the mountains in this year be carried into the sea; though the waters thereof should roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof: for there is this year, as there has been in past years, a river, the streams of which shall make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High; God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted: the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RAINBOW.

“ Far up the blue sky a rainbow unrolled
Its soft tinted pinions of purple and gold;
It was born in a moment, yet quick as its birth
It had stretched to the utmost ends of the earth ;
And, fair as an angel, it floated as free,
With a wing on the earth and a wing on the sea.”

“ And I will establish my covenant with you ; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations : I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud : and I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.”
—GEN. ix. 11—17.

How interesting to us all is the fact, that that bow which spans the clouds so beautifully amid the shower and the sunshine, has been looked upon by Abraham, by Noah, by Shem, by Japheth, by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob ; by all the world's grey fathers ; by apostles, evan-

gelists, saints, and martyrs, until the year that now is. There is something striking in the lasting nature of the institutions of God, and not less striking when contrasted with the evanescence of the generations—the successive generations of man. The expression “I do set my bow in the cloud,” does not mean that the bow was created or instituted then as a thing; but that it was appointed, or selected, or established then as a symbol and a memorial to all generations. Some think that it was then created, and if so, that there was no rain previous to the Flood, because none seems to have been needed; and no doubt a vast physical change has taken place in the air, the earth, the structure and the constitution of our globe since that era; but this opinion appears to me to be the least probable explanation; at all events, it is not necessary. The words are not, “I create the bow now for the first time,” but, “I appoint or constitute the existing bow that spans the cloud, to be a token of my covenant between me and you to all generations.”

This rainbow, which so many have looked on, has been the theme of poets, the admiration of man from age to age; ever fresh, ever beautiful,

never wasting or waning, like all God's grand creations, by the lapse of centuries ; and sometimes a poet expresses an idea, indeed it is the function of the great poet to do so, more fully and beautifully than the ordinary expositor can ; and therefore I read that beautiful passage from the ancient poet, Vaughan, who wrote in 1691, where he says :

“ How bright wert thou, when Shem's admiring eye
 Thy burnished flaming arch did first descry ;
 When Terah, Nahor, Haran, Abram, Lot,
 The youthful world's grey fathers in one knot,
 Did with attentive looks watch every hour
 For thy new light, and trembled at each shower !
 When thou dost shine, darkness looks white and fair ;
 Forms turn to music, clouds to smiles and air.
 Bright pledge of peace and sunshine, the sure tie
 Of thy Lord's hand, the object of his eye.
 When I behold thee, though my light be dim,
 Distinct and low, I can in them see Him
 Who looks upon thee from his glorious throne,
 And minds the covenant 'twixt all and one.”

Or, as it is expressed by Campbell, in language more chaste and beautiful, if it is possible, and familiar to most of us :

“ Triumphant arch, that fills the sky
 When storms prepare to part,
 I ask not proud philosophy
 To teach me what thou art.

“ When o’er the green, undeluged earth,
Heaven’s covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world’s grey fathers forth
To watch thy sacred sign!

“ How glorious is thy girdle cast
O’er mountain, tower, and town ;
Or, mirrored in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down.

“ As fresh in yon horizon dark,
As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
First sported in thy beam.

“ For faithful to His sacred page,
God still rebuilds thy span,
Nor lets the type grow pale with age,
That first spoke peace to man.”

So beautifully and truly has Campbell celebrated the same lasting sign.

It may be asked, why this great necessity for such a sign suspended in the sky to Noah and his family? We may see that everything in the chapter is a prescription against the fears, and the discouragements, and the despair of man. God gave him a prescription against the beasts of the field, he gave him a sense of safety against the violence of man, and now he furnished him with a pledge that such a convulsion as that which had swept the earth, and borne the ark to Ararat, should not again occur

in the history of mankind. One can easily understand that, without this sign suspended in the cloud for reminding Noah and his family of the pledge and promise of his God, every careering cloud must have frightened them. As they saw the lightnings gleam, and heard the thunders roar, and saw the shower begin to fall heavily, they must have been tempted to say, here is another deluge coming upon us—we need not sow the seed in the spring, for we shall be all swept away before the autumn; we need not build houses, for they will be carried away by the overwhelming flood. In short, all civilization, all progress, all domestic and social being, would have been, if not entirely prevented, at least nipped in its very commencement, unless God had given to man some great pledge on a great scale, and accompanied by some visible mark, that such a catastrophe should not happen to the world again. And hence, when Noah recollected God's word, and saw span the sky the beautiful bow that was the form and the representation of it,—as he saw the black cloud hide the sun,—as he heard the rain-drops begin to patter upon his roof,—as he listened to the thunder reverberating along the mountain

gorges, his heart did not faint, nor did his courage droop, for he felt, let nature discharge her terrible artillery, let the sky be clothed with sackcloth, let the red lightnings flash, and the whole horizon be lightened up with their splendours, I have a protection in the simple promise of my God, and I know that that promise will stand good to all generations, by the bow that is in the sky; that makes me feel perfect peace, sure that the word of the Creator is stronger than the forces of all creation combined together.

I explained in my last lecture that Noah offered a sacrifice when he came forth from the ark, and that his sacrifice was partly eucharistic, partly expiatory. Our sacrifice, I showed, has been offered. The rainbow comes after Noah's sacrifice; our rainbow, whatever it be, comes after ours. We have a sacrifice which we have not to offer as Noah had, "for this Christ did once for all." The difference between us and Noah is just this, that he, through a prospective faith, accompanied with the slaughter of an innocent creature, expressed his confidence in "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"—we, in the exercise of a retrospective faith, without the painful and san-

guinary accompaniment of a creature slain, rest in that sacrifice which was made once for all, and the last words of which still echo along the centuries, "It is finished." There is now no more offering for sin ; by that sacrifice the poison of sin was neutralized, our transgressions can be forgiven, our iniquities completely and fully put away ; and we know that there is no condemnation to us, just as certainly as Noah knew there was no second Flood to overflow the world. Noah reached the point from God's information that there would be no second Flood, and the rainbow was the sign of it ; and we have reached the conclusion from God's information, that there will be no second wrath to us who are in Christ Jesus, and the memorial of it is—what ? What is our rainbow ? It is the Bible that proclaims this truth—the Lord's supper that is its seal—the sign and the standing memorial of it. It is the Bible that proclaims this truth. The Bible does not make it true, any more than the rainbow made God's word to Noah true. It merely records the truth. Were the Bible annihilated, it would be no less true that Christ died for our sins. The Bible, therefore, is not what makes it true, but it is that blessed book

that records what is true, what has been previously accomplished, and never in its facts and its issues can pass away. As long, therefore, as the pages of the Bible are legible to us, so long as we hear from the pulpit, or can read these truths as they gleam from the sacred page, we have the sign, the memorial, the token of God's covenant with us in Christ Jesus, that there is no condemnation to them that are in him, that justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Bible therefore is the confirmatory sign that it is so; it is not for God's sake, but for ours—not because he needs it, but because our sense of safety demands it; and the result of having such a document as the Bible still lasting, is not that our safety is thereby made more perfect, but that our *sense* of that safety is thereby more deeply impressed. And so with the Lord's supper—as long as a communion table is spread on earth, we have a sign of the covenant before us; and it has been spread from generation to generation, and will be spread from generation to generation, still testifying to man, that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, and there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

It may be said, If we have the word of God in any shape, what is the use of a sign? I answer, scepticism would do without any sign, or sacrament, or symbol—superstition would make a god of it and worship it—enlightened Christianity looks at the sign, but passes through the sign and rests upon the substance—Christ, and him crucified.

This covenant of which the rainbow was the sign, was made with Noah irrespective of any worthiness in him. It is a most touching statement on the part of God, “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; though the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth;” and therefore the statement implies that this covenant was made with Noah, not because there was any excellence that now shot forth in man’s nature, but in spite of the accumulating demerits that were still crowded into man’s conduct. Even so, that covenant made with us in Christ is not the consequence of any excellence in us, but, on the contrary, it is in spite of the errors, demerits, and sins that are in us. It is to man as a sinner, and in spite of his sins, that the gospel comes,—that salvation is offered,—that a full, free, complete pardon is sealed and signed and

made over to him. In other words, "we are saved by grace," is as old as the days of Noah. It is not a mere theological dogma for divines to quarrel about, but it is a great, all-pervading, and precious reality; saved in spite of our sins; saved not because of our virtues, but in the face of all we merited, and in the face and in spite of all that we have demerited—"God so loved *us* that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life." Therefore when we apply to that God for pardon, when with the voice of prayer we draw near to his footstool, may we recollect that our sense of sin is not to deter us from going with boldness to him, who has promised to forgive it. He admits and contemplates the element of our sin in all his provisions and arrangements; his is not a dispensation to men who have no sins, but a dispensation of mercy to men who are stained and polluted by sin, in spite of and notwithstanding their manifold and innumerable sins. "We are saved by grace," means that we are saved in spite of what we are. There is not a flower that will bloom in Paradise regained; there is not an excellency or glory that will adorn that city that

hath foundations; there is not a joy into which we shall enter, or which will enter into us, which we shall be able to count as at any price, purchased by us, or worked for here in any shape. "By works" is the way to everlasting ruin, and many there are who go thus; by grace is the way to everlasting glory, and, alas, in the existing generation it is still the few that find it. "After that the loving-kindness of God our Saviour to man appeared, not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Let me notice another peculiarity in this covenant of which the rainbow is the token,—that the covenant made with Noah was as immutable and permanent as the sign that God hung up in the sky in order to mark it. Somewhere about 4000 years have elapsed since the Deluge; the bow still spreads itself on the bosom of the clouds, and no second deluge has overflowed the earth. Seed-time appears, harvest-home is still celebrated; and thus we see the truth and the immutability of the covenant and the covenant-memorial of God. And that better covenant that he has made with us is an ever-

lasting covenant, in all things well-ordered and sure, confirmed by his word and his oath, that by two immutable things we might have strong hope. God gives a word and an oath — not because it is necessary to him, but in condescension to the weakness of man. The whole economy of the gospel is not a system of types, sacrifices, shadows, ceremonies, oaths, and promises, because God needed them; but of kind expressions and proofs of condescending kindness on God's part, tending by every possible moral persuasion to convince us that he longs and loves to save us and to make us happy, as he now makes us holy, for ever and ever. The inherent suspicion in the natural man's heart is, that God lies in wait to destroy him. The first triumphant result of grace in man's heart is, the conviction that God delights to bless and make him happy. I could easily convince all the population of London that God is watching for their destruction like a tiger watching for his prey—that would be easy enough; but the great difficulty to overcome, for which types are suspended in the sky, sacraments continued upon earth, promises and oaths are echoing in the sacred volume, is to persuade men that God

has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, that he delights in mercy—that he longs to save—that he loves, not hates—would make happy—not make miserable. God’s everlasting covenant is in all things ordered and sure—confirmed by an oath and a promise. And to this covenant he beautifully alludes when he says, “In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness”—contrasting the little wrath with everlasting kindness—“will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed,”—as if it were by another deluge, or rather by the outbursting of that elemental fire which is the world’s second baptism,—“but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.” And regarding us as still in the ark, and still upon the floods, he says, “Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours;

and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates." I stated the Rabbinical tradition, that the ark had one window, as the Bible states, but that that window was one vast precious stone, and that stone an agate. "And thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

We have as great a warrant in believing this, as Noah ever had in believing that there would not be another Flood. We have as great reason for believing God's everlasting kindness and justice and tender mercy, immutable as his being, as ever Noah had in believing that there should not be a second Flood; and returning sabbaths are to us sure and eloquent signs, as the rainbow ever was to Noah that a second Flood should not overflow the earth. Heaven and earth may pass away, but one word shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled.—How can we doubt it?—Has any prophecy of the past failed?—The sceptic cannot lay a finger on a single prediction that was to take place before now, and show that it has failed; while the Christian can lay his hands on a thousand that

have been fully and gloriously fulfilled. I have as complete conviction that God's loving-kindness shall not depart from his own, nor God's overshadowing mercy be withdrawn from them, till heaven and earth pass away, as I have, or as Noah ever could have had, that a second Flood shall not overflow the earth. The least promise of God is surer and more lasting than the greatest work of man. Towers may fall, nations pass away, dynasties be overwhelmed, war sweep the wide world with its scourge, and all things that are visible be broken up and shattered and destroyed ; but not one jot shall pass away from God's word, till all shall be fulfilled. What a glorious foundation ! What a happy man should a Christian be ! What reasons for repose amid conflict ! What a foundation for rest amid tilting thrones and fearing populations has a Christian in this, that God is his, and that he is God's, and that Omnipresence watches him, Omnipotence defends him, and love and grace and mercy constantly follow him.

If there were no sun, I need not observe, because it must occur to all, there could be no rainbow. It is impossible that raindrops could make a rainbow without light ; if there were no

sun in the firmament, there could be no rainbow overspreading the black cloud. And it is no less true, if there were no Sun of righteousness, there could be no covenant or covenant-memorial ; for as truly as there can be no rainbow in the sky without a sun shining on it, so sure there can be no redemption of a sinner without a Redeemer in the heavens to bestow it. Christ is to redemption what the sun is to the whole solar system, and more—he is not a mere accessory in the system, he is its essence—he is not a mere ornamental detail, but his name is exalted above every name ; he is the substance, the pith, and essence of all Christianity. Christianity is Christ unfolded, and Christ is Christianity personated in himself. The whole of Christianity itself, with all its institutions, is merely a medium for conveying the light of this Sun of righteousness to us, and conveying this light in its purest, softest, and most beautiful effects. What are parables, and miracles, and types, and promises, and doctrines, and invitations, but the rays of pure light refracted and reflected from earthly objects, that we may look upon them, and the eye not suffer by excess of brightness. The whole facts of Christianity—the manger,

the cross, the crown of thorns, the grave, the resurrection—are objects on which the rays of the Sun of righteousness impinge, and from which they are reflected and refracted in all the beautiful colours of the rainbow. God's love is the pure light of heaven; God's mercy is that light softened and refracted in its transmission through Christ, and reaching sinners—the chiefest of sinners. Glory is what no man hath seen nor can see, in which God dwells as in light inaccessible and full of joy; but grace is glory transmitted through Christ, the medium, and thus subdued it is visible and welcome to us—the first dawn of that day of glory into which we shall soon enter. Thus, without a sun there could be no rainbow, without a Redeemer there can be no redemption, without Christ there is no Christianity, without a Saviour there is no salvation.

Not only is the sun requisite to constitute the rainbow, but also a dark cloud in the sky, without which no sun shining through the shower-drop could possibly make the rainbow visible. If there had been no Fall, there could be no rainbow; if there had been no dark cloud of sin, there would not have been, because there would

have been no necessity for the rainbow, the covenant memorial of mercy visible to mankind; but where sin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound, and what we look upon as the most unlikely, God has made the back-ground from which he throws up in richest splendour his own glory and sovereignty. Have you not noticed, as you have sometimes gazed into the distant west, how the banks of black clouds that threatened to overshadow the sun in his meridian throne, have sometimes formed themselves into a vermilion and golden couch, on which the king of day seems to retire to rest; and thus that which threatened to obscure him only makes him more glorious as he takes his western exodus. So has it been with man's Fall, that which was meant by Satan and which would seem to tend to hide the glory of the Great King, is overruled by God's rich mercy to bring greater glory to himself and to give greater happiness to mankind. And if we wish to see God most glorious, it is as he appears amidst the exhalations of sin, out of evil educing good, out of the Fall evolving a more glorious recovery, where he seems robed with the richest splendour, gathering to himself the brightest glory,

when he gathers within his gracious bosom the greatest number of pardoned and forgiven and sanctified sinners.

This dispensation has emphatically a rainbow character. What is the rainbow? I have shown that if there be no sun there can be no rainbow; and if no black cloud there can be no rainbow. The rainbow is therefore the mixture of both light and darkness. In hell there is darkness without light, the black and portentous clouds without one single relieving ray, in other words, without grace. In heaven there is the pure light, the sky without one cloud, the light without one shadow, the pure glory without a particle of guilt. There is no refraction there. But on earth there is the mixture of the two—here there are rolling over us the dark and portentous clouds in which the lightnings sleep and the thunders find their lair for a season; and when we dread lest the one shall be launched, and the other rush forth on the world, we look up and we see athwart the bosom of the blackest cloud the beautifully defined rainbow—mercy and truth which have met together, and righteousness and peace which have kissed each other. Heaven is the pure light without any darkness at all;

hell is the dense darkness without any light at all ; in this world the two are in collision—light and darkness, holiness and sin, God and Satan, truth and error ; and over the mingled mass the rainbow. The issue therefore is as certain as the throne, and the fulfilment of the promise of victory, as the pledges that God has so visibly and so graciously given.

Thus, as you see the rainbow span the sky, you may think of that first rainbow, made the covenant-memorial to Noah, that girded Ararat, and attested our God's promise, that there should be no second Flood, will hold good. But you may also pass from viewing the sign of this covenant to look at another. In the book of Revelation there is described a rainbow about the throne—the continuity of the two covenants being thus set forth. And whenever, therefore, you see the rainbow in the sky, you witness a pledge of God's loving-kindness, a memorial of his inexhaustible mercy, that carries you back to what he said at the beginning, and that carries you forward to what he will certainly fulfil, when time shall close and eternity begin its grand and endless march.

Every time we approach the communion

table, we cast our eyes upon the sign of that which is to be our everlasting covenant, what the rainbow was to the covenant made with Noah. God did not then create the rainbow, but consecrated it to be the symbol of a great truth. So, Jesus did not then create the bread and wine, but he took them, already existent, and consecrated them to be the symbols of a grand and blessed truth. I fear the expression sometimes applied at a communion table, that the minister consecrates the bread and wine, is a remnant of a superstition which is fast passing away. Jesus consecrated that bread and wine once for all, when he instituted the supper, just as he died once for all, when he expired upon the cross; and all that the minister does at that table, or rather, all that the communicants do at the table—for he is merely the president of the brethren there, not a priest in any form or shape whatever—is to pray, not that the elements may be changed, but that our faith may be strengthened, our love deepened, our devotedness increased, and our course like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And just as the rainbow reminded Noah, not only of what was passed, but also of the nature of the

age that was to come, so the Lord's supper is to be to us, not simply a memorial of a past transaction, but a pledge also of a future joy. It is not simply retrospective; it is also prospective. The Lord's supper is not simply a feast for faith to feed upon, but a spot in her ascent for hope to rest upon. It is not only, "Do this in *remembrance* of me," but substantially also, as indicated in 1 Cor. xi. 26, "Do this in remembrance of me *till I come.*" And some critics think, "Do this in remembrance of me," might be justly translated, "Do this and put me in mind." Just as the token of the bow in the cloud was appointed for God to look upon, and thus to be put in mind of his covenant with Noah and all flesh; so, too, the Lord's supper puts God in mind of his covenant with his own, as it over-arches with its holy span the past and the future, uniting a Saviour who came to suffer with a Saviour who will come to reign. Like the beautiful rainbow itself, the Lord's supper rests upon the cross, and reminds us that Christ our passover was slain for us; it then vaults into the sky, sweeps across the ages as they roll, and leans the other limb of its arch upon the diadem of Jesus; and thus connecting the past

and the future, the sacrifice with its humiliation, and the crown with its glory, it reminds us of him by whose ransom we are redeemed, of him who comes the second time without sin unto salvation to them that look for him.

As the rainbow was not the substance of the covenant, but the sign of it, so the Lord's supper is not the substance of our sacrifice, but the sign of it. The rainbow was not the covenant established with Noah, though it is called so, but the sign of it. The bread and wine are not the body and blood of Christ, though they are called so, but the signs of them. Noah looked through the sign, and saw the sign-giver behind it; we look through the symbol, and see the great sacrifice above, behind, and before it.

And when Noah looked upon the bow in the cloud, do you think he did so with dismay, and dread, and terror? Just the very reverse—the institution of the bow was to assure Noah, to make him happy, and to increase his confidence. And the very end of the Lord's supper is to produce the same effects on us.

We may look, as Christians, upon the supper of the Lord, just as Noah looked upon the

rainbow in the sky. He looked upon the cloud that was behind it, in which the thunder slept and the lightnings crouched, but the bow was to him the proof that they could not touch him. So, God's wrath is still revealed against all sin, and the law still thunders and lightens upon Mount Sinai; but between Sinai and us is the communion table, which is to us the sign that these fiery judgments cannot touch us. And therefore believers come to that table, not as crouching slaves to a tyrannical master, who is ready and waiting to scourge them; not as foes trembling to the presence of a terrible king, who is longing utterly to destroy them; but as children to a father, as the ransomed to a Redeemer; all feeling that if there be one festival in the year, it is a communion sabbath; and that if there ought to be a bounding heart on any Sunday, it is on that day when we celebrate the love that suffered for us, and look upon the symbol that tells us that His wrath, like the waters of the Deluge, is now dried up, and that a new and joyous sunshine gilds the valley where we are sojourners, and sprinkles the everlasting hills with its first beams, beyond which our home, and our heart, and our treasure are.

CHAPTER XV.

THE THREE FOREFATHERS.

“What havoc hast thou made, foul monster, sin!
Greatest and first of ills! The fruitful parent
Of woes of all dimensions! But for thee
Sorrow and slavery had never been.”

“And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”
—GEN. ix. 24—27.

NOAH planted a vineyard; discovered that fermentation could produce alcohol; drank of it, and became intoxicated. There can be no doubt from this, that ancient wine, as ancient as the Flood, was alcoholic. It is impossible to escape this conclusion. The assertion of those who contend that ancient wine had no alcohol in it, is not borne out by Scripture. Noah was not condemned for planting his vineyard, nor for fermenting his wine, nor was he guilty in that he drank wine; his guilt lay in drinking to excess. No judgment or censure is pro-

nounced upon Noah for touching wine, but for the excess in which he indulged, some say incautiously, but that I doubt: I believe he drank criminally; and therefore sinned in the sight of God. He awoke from this excessive stupor, by his drinking what he should not have touched, or used in moderation, and he discovered that he had been made the merriment of one of his children, on whom he pronounced the words prefixed to this chapter.

We have here the three great parents of the whole human family, Shem, and Ham, or Canaan, and Japheth. These are the three great springs of the human race, whose aboriginal distinctions are more or less perpetuated to this day; so universally and so deeply is the original impress struck on the three great families that form the earth's population, that we can still easily distinguish them by certain sharp characteristics; the three races are the Asiatic, the African, and the European. Subdivisions there unquestionably are; modifications of caste, complexion, and feature, unquestionably exist; but still, these three families are still physically distinct. The American, I need scarcely add, is not a distinct family, but an offshoot of the great

European family, or a descendant of Japheth, one of the three grey fathers and founders of the human race. It needs very little physiological learning to teach us, that the whole human race has a common origin. There are moral as well as material proofs. We have identity of sorrows and joy; identity of health and sickness; identity of fears and peace; identity of life, and community of death, to teach us unmistakeably that the black skin and the white skin, however much they differ as to outward aspect, cover one common flesh and blood, and belong to one family; and are but the varying characteristics of the great race of mankind.

These three, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the founders of the human race, met together in the ark, emerged from that ark on the sides of Ararat, and went forth from the mountain range to spread the human family from it to the very ends of the habitable globe; the human race, in its founders, met once all together under one roof, and around one altar, and beneath the overshadowing wings of one Father; and were upheld and guided together as one crew on the stormy waves to a momentary rest on Ararat. Blessed be God, it is not the last time they shall

meet—they shall meet again, emerging from a more awful catastrophe, in a yet more glorious ark, to take possession of a yet more magnificent Ararat—to enter upon a more lasting home; out of which all cares shall be banished; into which all blessings shall flow; and from which we shall never go forth exiles and strangers, like Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, to fertilize the soil with the sweat of our brow, and to water the earth with fast-flowing tears; for then there will be no more sorrow, nor tears, nor sighing, nor crying, but all former things shall have passed away.

Noah sinned, and yet his sin, whilst it was his guilt, was overruled of God to be the occasion and the proof of a great and important fact. It is this—the Flood that washed away a vast population from the surface of the earth, did not wash out sin from the depths of the human heart. God said, before he let loose that dread judgment, “Every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually;” and He said, after that judgment had done its mission, “I will not again curse the ground for man’s sake, though the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” We are told by St. Peter,

that the Flood was to the antediluvians what baptism is to us ; and now, as that Flood only cleansed the outer surface of the earth, but did not cleanse the inner thoughts of the heart, so baptism — for the parallelism is complete — cleanses the outer flesh, but it does not purify the inner heart. Noah emerged from the Flood a sinner ; Ham stepped forth from the ark a sinner ; and does it need any argument of mine to persuade any, that an unregenerate man baptized in the most canonical way, and by a priestly hand, according to the most exact ritual, under the most plausible circumstances, emerges from the waters in which he has been bathed, or from the sprinkling to which he has been subjected, just as he was before ? giving proof that as the Flood could not make Paradise again overspread the earth with its glory, and thus anticipate millennial scenes, so ecclesiastical baptism cannot do for man that which is the prerogative and function of the Holy Spirit alone—regenerate, and sanctify, and save the soul.

This sin of Noah teaches another fact. It was overruled by God to show that Noah was not, as it were, a second Adam, by whom and in

whom the great experiment of humanity was to be attempted again. He was not the proof that God was starting with a new plan, or a new foundation. The fact that he sinned is the evidence that he was made, or born rather, in the image of Adam, and inherited Adam's sin and deep alienation from God. All that was sinful in Noah, was from Adam; all that was holy, beautiful, and true, we are told in a previous chapter, was by grace. We learn, too, the inveteracy of man's guilt, from the fact that ages did not wipe it away, that penalties did not destroy it, that all schemes and plans ever since have all failed to alter it. The whole vessel of humanity is flawed, and marred, and tainted; and the more we know poor fallen man, the more abased we must feel. There is much in man to pity, much to deplore, much to pray for; but it is not our part to set ourselves in conscious and sceptical conceit upon the judgment throne, and fulminate anathemas, and pronounce condemnation, where it becomes us to bow the knee at the throne of grace, and to pray that the God who made would re-make and regenerate mankind.

The more immediate subject of these reflec-

tions is the sentence of Noah. Shall I call it the curse?—I will rather call it the prediction pronounced by Noah, and fulfilled, as facts demonstrate, in the case of all the offspring of Shem, and Ham, and Japheth. Shem's excellence was not the cause of Shem's blessing; Ham's sin was not the cause of Ham's judgment. It is quite possible to be the occasion of a thing, and yet not to be the cause of that thing. The prediction uttered by Noah was not the ebullition of private passion, but the expression of God's everlasting and immutable purpose. If I were to be injured by a person, and instantly to retaliate in bitter anathemas, it would be sin and revenge, which ought not to be. But when a minister of God, inspired as Noah was, becomes the organ of a prophecy of God, the evidence that he did not express his own private feelings, but was the medium of God's purpose, is found in the fact, that what he prophesied has been literally fulfilled. If this had been personal spite, would God, by the fulfilment of it, have sanctioned it? Surely not. Noah did not give vent to an angry curse, because Ham had sinned; or break forth into a great blessing, because Shem had done good; but he became

on this occasion the organ, and no more, of prophecy; the instrument, and no more, of a blessing pronounced upon the one, and of an awful and a solemn judgment inflicted upon the other.

This promise was not so much a personal infliction, meant to light on persons, but a family or a national thing, meant to brand or to beautify great sections of the human race. It was not Canaan personal that he cursed; it was not Shem personal that he blessed; but their descendants. Thus, when we read in the Scripture, "Esau have I hated, Jacob have I loved," we see it was not the individual Esau or the individual Jacob that is spoken of, but the family or the state of which they were the founders and the great forefathers. Even so this great curse or punishment here denounced by Noah, lighted on a race.

But it is the characteristic of all great judgments, that they are transmitted only when the son imitates the depravity of the father, and becomes the conductor of the curse that was pronounced upon the family; but the instant that the son or the descendant dissents from the family in its corrupt features, and developes

new and happier ones, the transmission of the curse is arrested, and the individual who is the exception in the family becomes an inheritor of the blessing. An evidence of this is found in the fact that Melchisedec was a descendant of Canaan and of Ham, yet Melchisedec was king of righteousness and king of peace, blessed of God, and a type of the great Messiah. Abimelech was a descendant of Ham or of Canaan, as we find in the 20th chapter of Genesis; yet we read of him that the integrity of his heart in the sight of God was great, and was recognised and blest of God. Thus we find, that though the curse be denounced upon a family, because of some first founder's sin, as soon as a member of that family emerges by purity of character, by loftiness of purpose, by regeneration of heart, from the circle in which the rest are, as far as he is concerned the curse is arrested in its transmission, and he becomes an inheritor of the blessing which was pronounced upon Shem. Thus, the judgment of Noah was rather a prophecy relating to a race, than a curse or a blessing pronounced upon individuals. The difference between the two is very marked—a prophecy is what we know will

be ; a curse or a blessing is what we wish to be. What we know will be is one thing, what we wish to be is a very distinct and a very different thing. A bad man wishes ill to the human race ; a prophet predicts judgments upon the guilty. Here we have Noah not imprecating a curse to be, but predicting a grand and distinctive condition, domestic, social, and national, that should ultimately be, and has really been. In the very next passage of Genesis, we read of the divisions of the family of Canaan, of Shem, and Japheth ; the sons of Japheth divided the isles around the Mediterranean Sea, including the European nations ; the dwellings of Shem were all towards the East, or Asia ; the descendants of Ham occupied Africa, and the western parts of Asia, Sidon being their border. Not only does the prophet determine the details of the possessions of the children of Shem, and of Ham, and of Japheth, but he predicts that the descendants of Shem, or Israel, shall have the descendants of Canaan, or his father Ham, for slaves or bondmen. If we take a chart, and trace on it the history of nations, we shall find that the curse denounced upon the family of Ham or Canaan, has been literally and strictly

fulfilled. For instance, the Canaanites, as their name testifies, who occupied Canaan before the children of Israel took possession of it, were driven, some from their land, and others were made bondsmen and slaves to Israel. At a subsequent era, in the days of David, the descendants of Ham, or the Canaanites, were swept completely from the land of Canaan. They afterwards settled in Africa; and subsequently they became part and parcel of the Roman empire; and in later times we all know that the descendants of Ham, or the Africans, have been more or less the slaves and the bondsmen of the descendants of Japheth. Let anybody read the history of Africa—I am not justifying what is there done, but citing fact—has it not been the nursery of slaves for the nations of Asia and of Europe? And to this day one petty prince in Africa goes to war with another, and the trophies of the conqueror are slaves for the markets of Asia and of America. Slavery is at this moment, notwithstanding the noble sacrifices we have made, as a country, to suppress it, as flourishing and as wide-spread as ever it was in the history of unhappy Africa—in fact, efforts to arrest it have strangely acted in spreading and

supporting it ; and yet it is nothing in the African that makes him essentially a slave. People fancy, that because the African's skull is not rounded so beautifully as ours, that therefore the African's brain is altogether inferior to ours, and his nature very different. Are you aware that the magnificent Christian writer Augustine was an African, it may be a Canaanite? Are you aware that Hannibal, who shook imperial Rome, and made the Cæsars tremble on their thrones, was an African, probably as black as a negro, a descendant of Ham, not from Japheth? And were it not that there is a mysterious judgment resting on the race, that we cannot remove, and that they seem yet unable to overcome, the African, as susceptible of education as we are, would be as signalized by his literature, his skill in war, his success in diplomacy, as any of the descendants of Japheth, or of Shem. At the same time it is worthy of remark, that the very curse of Africa is likely to be the medium of its chiefest blessing ; for slavery, which we so deeply deprecate and deplore, is really overruled by God at this moment, to be the means of the Christianization of that country. How often have we tried to ascend the rivers

of Africa, and seen our travellers perish midway by the malaria or poisonous air of the climate! And how often have our missionaries travelled in that land, and left their graves the only evidence that they were there! But now the slaves of America are coming into contact with the Christianity of America, and with the Christianity of other nations of the earth; so that at this moment, evil as it is, slavery is overruled to originate black Christian missionaries, to whom the climate offers no obstruction; and who love their countrymen, and go forth to do them good; and thus that which has stained the hands of Europeans with infamy and sin, will be overruled by the God of all grace, to be the enlightenment, and the elevation of a country long sunk in darkness and in the shadow of death. The prediction, that the sons of Canaan shall be bondsmen of bondsmen, is expressive of the worst slavery that can be conceived; whenever the Hebrew writers wish to express their sentiments very strongly, they redouble the word and speak thus, "King of kings," which means a very great king; so "Lord of lords;" and in this case, "Bondsmen of bondsmen," denotes the greatest slavery

that man can be subjected to. We do not wish to state that this ancient prophecy, which was uttered in the neighbourhood of Ararat four thousand years ago, and which is fulfilling, and being fulfilled at the present moment, defying all efforts to diminish it or to avert it, sanctions our support of slavery in the slightest manner; man was never made to be the property of man, but to be the possession and the property of God only. We are not to take God's prophecy, and go forth and do what our consciences tell us is sin, in order, as we allege, to sanctify that sin by appealing to the predictions of God. A specimen of this I have been amazed at reading in a work published by an illustrious politician of the present day. A very able biography of Lord George Bentinck has been written by a distinguished politician, D'Israeli; and in that biography he makes the extraordinary statement—that it was predicted that the Jews should crucify Christ; and therefore, it is implied, the Jews were not guilty of any sin in doing so. He says, if the crucifiers had not been there, how could the Victim have been immolated? and that the Jews' part in that dread tragedy was as necessary, and therefore

as sinless, as was the fact, that the great Victim should die; in other words, he assumes, that we are warranted to attempt to fulfil prophecies, at any sacrifice. Where God prophesies, he will take care of the fulfilment; but where God prescribes to us, it is ours to obey his precepts; and if Mr. D'Israeli, who has so eloquently written upon this subject, had only read the Acts of the Apostles, he would there have found it stated upon authority that he would not, I presume, question, that whilst it was the purpose and prediction of God, that Christ should die, it was, notwithstanding, sin and criminality in the Jews, to put him to death. St. Peter, speaking to the Jews, said, "Jesus of Nazareth, being delivered by the determinate counsel"—there is God's purpose—"and foreknowledge of God"—there is God's prophecy—"ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." So that while it was matter of purpose and object of prophecy, it is asserted at the same time by Peter—and if we read Peter's addresses at the commencement of the Acts, we shall find the distinction more than once—that it was not the less sinful in the Jews, because they executed the prophecy of

God. So Cyrus was God's battle-axe, to do God's work, yet he was guilty nevertheless. Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled God's prophecy, and yet Nebuchadnezzar's sin was not virtue. We must distinguish between a prophecy and a precept; it is our business to obey the precepts; it is God's prerogative to look after the fulfilment of his own prophecies. Never should we venture to quote a prophecy as justifying an act of ours. We are stepping into God's province when we try to fulfil prophecies; but in our own, obeying precepts, because they are the prescriptions of God himself. Whatever, then, may be the nature and effects of the ancient prediction uttered by Noah, and however fully it has been realized in the lapse of years, and however necessary that all should be fulfilled, we are not to conclude that our fulfilling it exempts us from the crime that cleaves to those who make man a property of man; and treat the creature, made in the image of God, as if he were one of the beasts of the field.

We have looked at the fulfilment of the prophecy in reference to Canaan; let us now see it in relation to Shem. We know from the 10th chapter of Genesis, that the Jews and the Asi-

atics are the descendants of Shem—about this there is no dispute whatever, amongst those who have written upon ethnography, or watched and traced the origin and descent of nations. It is said, “Blessed be the God of Shem.” That implies that Shem should have God for his covenant God. The first promise made to Abraham was, “I am thy God; and I will be a God unto thy seed.” We may trace in the constant allusion to God as the covenant God of the Jews, echoing along the centuries the first prophecy that was issued by Noah respecting Shem, and the God of Shem. Hence, from the altar of the Jew alone, amidst the nations of the earth, there ascended pure incense; from the lips of the Jew, amidst the mass of nations around, there issued true praise; and only amid the nation of the Jews was there exhibited and developed that sublime and lofty humility of heart, that earnest and pure consistency of character, which indicated the presence of the God of Shem, and the special benediction of the Lord God of Israel.

Let us notice also the prediction respecting Japheth, and see how far it has been fulfilled. But here there is a difficulty in the application

of the word "he." "God shall enlarge Japheth, and *he* shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Some think that *he* there relates to God, and that it means God shall dwell in the tents of Shem; others think, and with greater propriety, that it relates to Japheth, and that it states that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem. But it is remarkable enough, that in whatever light we take it, it has been strictly fulfilled. Does it mean that God shall dwell in the tents of Shem? then let us recollect the words of the evangelist, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us." The literal translation of it is, He shall be the "Shechinah" in the midst of Shem. The word "Shechinah" is derived from the Hebrew word "To dwell;" it therefore means that God shall have his temple, his residence, his altar, his dwelling-place, in the tents of Shem; or, in other words, that the Word shall be made flesh, and dwell in the midst of us. But if it means that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, then it implies, first, that the great blessings of the Jews, the descendants of Shem, shall be shared by the Gentiles or the Europeans, the descendants of Japheth; and that Japheth dwelling in the tents

of Shem, or the Gentile admitted to the same grand privilege as the Jew, shall be one of the blessed characteristics of the latter day. And it is plainly with some such view as this, or rather, with this prophecy clearly before him, that Isaiah proclaims, with reference to the admission of the Gentiles, addressing the Jews, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited:" he evidently alludes to the prediction that Japheth, or the Gentiles, shall yet dwell in, or share the privileges of, the descendants of Shem, or the Jews.

The prediction added to this, that God shall enlarge Japheth, has been most strikingly fulfilled in the history of nations to this time. Which of the three nations has been most enlarged? Every attempt made by the Saracen or the Turk, by the African or the Asiatic, to take the land of Japheth, has signally failed; but on the other hand, we find that every effort made by the descendants of Japheth, that is, the Euro-

pean race, and the crown and the flower of it, the Saxon portion of it, has been followed by widespread and triumphant success. We can quote America as a specimen of God enlarging the dwelling of Japheth. We can point to our countrymen in Palestine, to thousands penetrating Africa, and tens of thousands finding settlements by all the great rivers of Asia, as proofs that God still enlarges Japheth, and spreads that great and powerful section of the human family from sea to sea, and from the river even to the very ends of the earth. It is remarkable also that we hear, in this day, our newspapers and our statesmen continually speak of the indomitable energy of the Saxon race, and of the destiny of the world to be peopled and subdued by them. This is just the unconscious attestation of statesmen, philosophers, and literary men, to the fulfilment of the prophecy, "God shall enlarge Japheth;" and, quite as remarkable, nations seem to flourish precisely—if you will allow the expression—in proportion as the Saxon element is in them, apart from the depressing influence of Romanism, and the elevating power of Protestant Christianity. Looking to Ireland, let us ask, which is the

expanding race, the Saxon, or the Celtic? Who are the depressed race there, who have recourse to emigration as their only means of escape from utter destruction? The race that are, as it can be proved, the descendants of Ham, or the Milesian race; for the present Irish language is actually a dialect of the Punic or Carthaginian language spoken in the days of Hannibal. At all events, it is so like it, that it would appear, from inscriptions on ancient monuments, to be an offshoot from it. Now whilst it is quite true, that Protestantism elevates a nation, and Popery degrades it, there seems something in the Saxon character powerful, indomitable, expansive; while there seems something in the African character, wherever its blood even mingles, or still more predominates, that leads to degeneracy, weakness, and almost ruin. What is this, but the 19th century proclaiming by its facts, that the prophecy which was uttered 4000 years ago is true; and that thy word, O God, is truth?

We might show at far greater length, but what is here stated clearly proves the fulfilment of this ancient prophecy, that Canaan shall be a servant of servants unto his brethren; that Shem shall be blessed in the knowledge and

enjoyment of the true God; and that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem, that is, be participator in Shem's privileges, or, as some think that dwelling in tents is connected with enlargement, it also means taking possession of the country of Shem. Let us look to the East—who are the lords of India? In whose hands is it at this moment? In the hands of the descendants of Japheth. How striking thus to see this ancient prophecy fulfilled before our eyes! How strange, after proof on proof, that any man should doubt that Moses wrote as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit of God!

One or two short lessons are suggested. We see from ancient prophecy, thus carried into fulfilment by God, that his word shall cleave its way to its own accomplishment, in spite of all obstructions, and in the face of every difficulty. Man thinks he is acting for himself, whilst unconsciously he is but the instrument in the hand of God. He has sketched the patriarchal cartoon, and man is rushing, in all ages, with all his might, to fill it up. God has predicted what shall be, and man unconsciously is doing what He has said must be. The accidents of time

are the inspirations of God; the deeds of man are the fulfilment of the prophecies of God.

There is much of sovereignty in all that God does. Why curse Canaan? why bless Shem? why enlarge Japheth? These are some of the "whys" that we often ask, and to which we can get no answer. We have less of originating power than we suppose; God reigns. "Thou hast hid these things, O Father, from the wise and prudent; and thou hast revealed them unto babes." Why this was we cannot say. The close will explain the beginning; the light of eternity shall shine upon the dark nooks of time; the voices of heaven in the last day, will resolve and harmonize the apparent discords which we hear and are puzzled by, in this dispensation.

If we are the children of Japheth, let us recollect that we are the partakers of great privileges, and have, therefore, higher, loftier, less exhaustible responsibilities. Why does God make one man stronger and another richer than his fellow? Not that they may exact more, but that they may give and sacrifice more. Why has God made Japheth so great? That Japheth

may be the instrument only of greater good. Why is the English tongue the possession of America, and of India, and of Palestine, and of vast sections of Africa, and increasingly so? It is, no doubt, that this tongue, inspired by the riches of Divine light, and life, and grace, may be the medium of countless benedictions to all the ends of the earth. There is nothing we may look to with greater hope than this, that our country's power is spreading every day; and there is nothing we should pray for with greater fervour, than that where our country's power is felt, mankind may taste and feel her mercy too. Wherever the roll of our conquering drum is heard, may the glad voice of the gospel be heard also; on whatever strand, or in whatever harbour, our ships drop their anchors, may the glad tidings of a Saviour be heard. God grant that Englishmen may go forth to the ends of the earth, not like the locusts of Egypt, to blast and blight every green and beautiful thing; but the pioneers of good, the lights of the world, to shed the splendours of the cross upon all mankind; or the salt of the truth, silently, but no less effectually, to saturate all that are in contact with them, or under their

influence. If we are exalted in privilege as the descendants of Japheth, there is no room for pride. Our privileges and our sins should equally humble us. Our privileges are not our own, therefore they should humble us. Our sins are our own, therefore they should humble us. Amid our blessings we should ever feel, "Who has made thee to differ?" and as God has made us, not by our desert, but in his own sovereignty, so great, it is that we may be a blessing in proportion to the extent of our prosperity unto all that come into contact with us.

Let us learn, in the last place, that to be the descendant of Japheth, highly exalted, and even to be the descendant of Shem, with the knowledge of the true God, is not necessarily to be a Christian. Many are Abraham's children according to the flesh, who have no saving acquaintance with Abraham's God. Let us remember that to be classed in the family of Japheth, will only add to our condemnation, if we walk unworthy of it; and that the great pre-requisite that admits into glory, and without which we shall never see God in mercy and in love, is to be born again. It matters little whether we be English, Scotch, French, or Irish;—if we be not

Christians,—real, living, converted Christians, —we can never become the heirs of God, and fellow-partakers with the saints of the covenant of promise. The kingdom of God is not country, or climate, or race, or meat, or drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XVI.

ENOCK'S PROPHECY.

“ Oh, on that day, that wrathful day
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away.”

“ And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”—
JUDE 14, 15.

IN the course of some lectures on the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (Voices of the Dead,) there will be found illustrated at length these words, “ By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” We now turn to another fact in the history of the same illustrious member of the Church before the Flood, the prophecy here alleged by the sacred penman to have been uttered by Enoch.

But before we do so, let us notice some of the characteristics of Enoch. First of all, we find that the line of Enoch was the lineage out of which Christ was to come. In marking out the family of Adam in its best and most beautiful divisions, the line of Cain is passed by, and seemingly forgotten; the line of Seth, so much the superior of the twain, is selected as the lineage out of which Christ was to come, and yet this line is any thing but faultless. We have only to trace it through its successive links until it comes to the days of Noah, and onward to the patriarch Abraham, and we shall find that the very choicest specimens of all humanity—those singled out because of their peculiar and distinctive excellence—were yet morally vitiated, and made in the likeness of the fallen Adam.

In looking at the character of Enoch, we see that the highest personal piety is perfectly consistent with a life led in the world, and the fulfilment of all the duties and the responsibilities that flow from it. Enoch was not a recluse, his home was not an anchorite's cell, his life was not that of an ascetic. He did not live a monk—he did not die a suicide. He had sons and

daughters, he belonged to society, he was a husband, a father, and a friend; and yet he was distinguished for his piety and superiority to the sins, the follies, and the vices of mankind. We have therefore in this early age evidence that the ascetic life is not necessary to the highest Christian attainments, that the very loftiest approach to the character of God may be realized without coming mechanically out of the world, but by being morally superior to its sins and its corrupt practices and evils.

Above all, we have the character of Enoch defined by one grand feature, namely, his relation to God. He is said to be one who walked with God. This is a most expressive trait; it is the leading touch in the picture, that reveals all the rest. His walking with God, or his relationship to God, like the great law of gravitation in the physical world, kept all the rest of the parts of his character in perfect proportion, harmony, and order. Wherever there is genuine piety, there will be pure morality. Let our relationship to God be put right by regeneration of heart, and renewal of nature, and our relationships to each other will all beautifully fall into their natural and proper

places. How short, however, is the biography of this good man! How little is said of him, but how much is implied! Read the life of a Cæsar, an Alexander, or a Napoleon, and you find whole volumes necessary to register their exploits; but the reader of the life of one of the most illustrious Christians of the ancient day, sees a single line alike his epitaph and his biography. The roaring cataracts of time make great noise and startle the still world; but the sweet and gentle streams that beautify it as they run with a belt of verdure, and flower, and fruit, make no noise at all. And yet, the few words in which Enoch's life is expressed are eloquently suggestive. A whole biography of holy and consistent character is called up by the simple announcement, "Enoch walked with God."

And when one looks at the rest of this record, and the characteristics of the age, as these again are enunciated by God himself in a subsequent chapter, we must see how very solitary, in one sense, Enoch's life was. He was not alone in the sense that he was not in society; but he was alone in his deepest and truest sympathies, and feelings, and relations. The highest Christian in the heart of the greatest crowd may be far more alone

than the ascetic living in a cell, or perched upon the trunk of a tree in the midst of the remotest desert. Real *aloneness* is not something corporeal, material, outer; it is spiritual, moral, inner. Enoch, in the midst of a world of great excitement, of rare criminality, of vast enterprise, walked with God; alone in his feelings, with few to respond to them, or to take sweet counsel with him, as he walked to the place where God dwelt. And yet, in this solitariness of his character, there was a sublimity that only makes it appear the more illustrious and beautiful. He walked with God, when the rest of mankind about him were walking, as it is subsequently recorded, after the imaginations of the thoughts of their own hearts, which were only evil continually.

We learn from this allusion to Enoch, that God never yet in the history of mankind was without a witness to himself. There never has been an age when the corruption has been so dark, universal, and unrelieved, that there was not one single witness to protest and testify against it. In the darkest eclipse of the heaven, some bright stars have caught the eye of some spectator; and in the bleakest deserts, wilds, and

solitudes of the earth, there blooms often the most beautiful and fragrant flower; unseen by man, yet as beautiful as if meant for universal inspection. And in the mediæval ages, when the whole visible Christian framework had become degenerate and corrupt, there were links of a true succession invisible to man, but visible to God, connecting the apostles of the first century with the Reformers of the sixteenth, and indicating that God never in the worst of times was without a witness to proclaim his praise, or bid the nations look and live and be happy.

We learn also that the time never was when there was no church in the world. The church is not a thing of the New Testament as distinguished from the Old. There was a church when Adam and Eve and Abel were the three who met first in the name of Jesus, and realized then as truly, if not so fully, as we do now the fulfilment of the promise, "I am in the midst of them." And there was a church, wherever Enoch found one or two, as surely he did, to join with him in worshipping God. And wherever now, under whatever form, or longitude, or latitude, two or three shall meet together in Christ's name, there will be a true church of the

Lord Jesus Christ. The church has been from the beginning ; and if we are to listen to that church, let us listen to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, to Job, to Isaiah, to the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, its choicest members, for all these were members, teachers, and ministers of it.

The church never yet was without teachers. The name Enoch means "teaching," although some have thought it means rather "educated." He was a public teacher of the truth. He taught it by what he was, as well as by what he said. He walked with God, and that walk was an eloquent homily : God took him, or translated him to himself, and that translation was an impressive peroration to it. When Enoch therefore walked with God, he was, and thus showed he was, a teacher sent from God. The fact that Enoch prophesied, is evidence that he had an official character as well as a personal relationship to God, and was a teacher of the church in which he lived, a prophet who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, a light in the surrounding darkness, an oracle in the midst of abounding error.

The holiest man was selected by God to de-

nounce the most awful judgment, not only upon that age, but upon all mankind at the close of this dispensation. Who was selected to prophesy, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him"? It was the holiest man. So awful and solemn a duty, it was fit to devolve upon one who walked with God, and lived nearest to him. He was the prophet of the judgment to come, whose life was the most beautiful instance and specimen of Christian consistency and conduct. Holy lips alone should enunciate awful judgments. It was a holy man who was selected to be God's first prophet of the coming woe. The burden of a prophet's woe should lie upon a heart that is the habitation of God himself. And therefore, Enoch, the righteous, was selected to give utterance to the prophecy, so very solemn in its character, "The Lord cometh to execute judgment."

Having offered these prefatory remarks upon the prophet, let us look at his prophecy. The

first question that has been asked is, Where is this prophecy recorded? Where did Jude find it? Nothing is said in the 5th chapter of Genesis about Enoch prophesying the descent of judgment upon the nations of the earth. Some have supposed that he refers to an apocryphal book called the Book of Enoch, which contains a statement something like this; and that Jude, therefore, assumes the inspiration of a book not registered in the sacred canon; but this cannot be proved. In the first place, it can be proved that the Book of Enoch, which some scholars have discovered, and which, I believe, one has published, was not written till the 4th or 5th century after the Christian era; and that Jude, therefore, could not refer to a book which did not exist at the time when he wrote his Epistle. Nor is there any necessity for supposing that he at all refers to any book. He states a fact; and the same inspiration that prompted Jude to write his Epistle, revealed to Jude the prophecy; and the truth of the prophecy, like the truth of the Epistle, rests upon the immediate and unquestioned inspiration of God. We therefore conclude that Jude knew the fact to be so, and the prophecy to be truth; and inspired and

guided by the Holy Spirit of God, he enun-
ciated it for the information of the church in all
ages.

We find in Jude the true use to be made of
good men. Jude records simply the prophecy,
but does not propose the worship of Enoch ;
and our practice ought to be, not to canonize
the saints that are gone, but to collect the lessons
they have left behind them, to learn those lessons
as far as they were the echoes of God's truth,
and to imitate their conduct as far as they fol-
lowed and imitated the Lord Jesus Christ. The
only relic of Enoch that Jude recognised, is the
prophecy he left behind him, and the only im-
ages that we should regard of those who have
gone before us, should be the truths they taught,
and the examples they set. It is not the adora-
tion of their names, but the imitation of their
examples, that becomes us. In no part of the
word of God are we told to collect the relics,
or to ask the intercession, or to apply for the
merits of those who have preceded us to glory ;
but in every part of it we are told to learn the
pure lessons that they taught, to imitate the
holy example they developed, and to be guided
by that learning and that imitation only so far

as they taught the truth of God, and imitated the Lord Jesus Christ.

We learn, from this allusion of Jude, that Enoch was the first and most ancient prophet after God himself. The first prophecy was in the form of a promise, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head." The next catholic or universal prophecy was that enunciated by Enoch, when he said, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." And yet, we believe this prophecy to be true, not because it is old. Mere age does not make falsehood truth, and seeming novelty does not make truth false. Antiquity without truth is simply the inveteracy of error. We do not look to the antiquity of a dogma, in order to assert our reception of it, but to the truth of that dogma. Some ancient things are false, some apparently recent things are true; and God's inspired truth is like himself; it was, is, and ever shall be, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But we accept the prophecy, not because it is a relic floated down from an ancient and a distant age, but because it is a truth bearing the image and the superscription of inspiration itself.

Now this prophecy of Enoch was strongly applicable to the antediluvian age. Men lived long, and because they lived to a great age and were vigorous in health, as they were gigantic, some of them, in stature, their sins and their crimes were corresponding to their age, their strength, and their position. Hence our Lord, when alluding to the days before the Flood, describes them in such terms as these, "In the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came"—a picture that implies the utter absence of anything like real religion, from the hearts and the cares and the anxieties of the antediluvian population; and no doubt they were saying then, as men say now, "All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." How startling to their atheistic hopes must have been this voice, clear and piercing, ringing amid a thoughtless population, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all!" This voice of Enoch must have sounded to the antediluvian sinners exactly as the warning of our Lord in the par-

able sounded to the fool while he was saying, "I have much goods laid up for many years,"—"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." In an age when dishonesty was promising gain, when vanity was promising distinction, when ambition was promising place and power, when unbelief was promising safety, God's word, louder and stronger than them all, proclaimed, "The Lord cometh to execute judgment upon all the ungodly."

Now such a warning voice as this is no less needed now. It is literally, if I may use the expression, more true now than it was then. Every day that shuts down upon the earth brings us one notch nearer that epoch, when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his saints; and every year as it closes brings us a greater stage nearer to that day of the Lord, when the heavens and the earth shall be on fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and a new heaven and a new earth shall emerge, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Every one knows how prone poor humanity is, even in its best, that is, its Christian aspect, to settle down and say, "Two or three years ago, five or six years ago, I thought we were on the eve of great

things; I thought that the earth was quaking, and all things agitated and disorganized, preparatory to the advent of Him who shall re-adjust and re-order and re-harmonize all; but now all things continue as they were: since the fathers slept there is no change. Nature still pursues her course, the sun still rises, and stars still come, and all things continue as they were." We need a booming sound borne across the waters from the continent of Europe, from nations still agitated, seething, and convulsed, to give us, like a premonitory warning from heaven, a pre-sign how frail is the crust on which we stand; how many, how deep, and how terrific are the powers that are sleeping, not extinguished or destroyed, beneath it.

But it is refreshing to recollect, that what is fitted to awe an ungodly and a thoughtless world, is calculated only to give consolation to the people of God. Enoch felt no dismay, because he believed his own prophecy; his heart beat calm in the prospect of it; and those saints who shared in Enoch's piety were conscious of no feelings of awe, or alarm, or dread, because they anticipated the sure fulfilment of Enoch's solemn prophecy. It is so now; those who may

be justly agitated by the prospect of approaching doom, are not the people of God. They stand loose to the world; their repose is not on its breast, they rest on the Rock of ages, and feel perfectly sure that "though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof; there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early." Therefore the believer can say to his own heart, "Be still;" as God now says to him, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth." The ungodly may tremble, Enoch's prophecy is the knell of their doom. It appears all dark to them, it reflects only sunshine to the people of God; it is the savour of death to the sinner, the savour of life to the Christian. The Lord cometh in majesty, but yet in mercy, taking vengeance upon them that know him not, but gathering to himself, far beyond the reach of scathe or injury, those

who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In the heart of the believer, it is the day of his glorious conquest, the commencement of his true, his joyous life; the day when all perplexities shall be cleared up, when the troubler shall no longer have power, and the troubled shall no longer have pain, when God shall extinguish the springs of sorrow, and wipe away all tears from all eyes, and we, removed for ever from contact with sin, shall be for ever with the Lord. The aspect of the text depends very much upon the character of the reader. This prophecy of coming judgment comes like the knell of doom, where it is believed, to the unrenewed; but to the children of God it sounds as the first note of their sure and approaching jubilee. They feel perfect peace in the prospect of it. Do we?

What a contrast will be presented to his previous state, when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his saints! Once a sufferer, now a triumphant King. Once in a manger, now upon a throne. Once weeping for us, suffering in our stead, dying for our salvation; now, to them who look for him, does he come wearing many crowns, robed in majesty, the second time

without sin unto salvation. The contrast between Christ's first advent and his second advent is entire; and yet both advents, the sorrowful and the triumphant, are to a believer only springs of comfort, of repose, and peace; he knows him in whom he has believed.

This prophecy of Enoch is evidently the chord that runs through all the prophecies of the Old and New Testament Scriptures: it seems to have been the basis or suggestive source of them all. It was the first seed sown. The very same truths are expressed by our Lord himself, when he said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come:" and again, when he stated, "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be;" that is, he shall come with all the unexpected speed, and with all the dazzling splendour, of the lightning flash in the dark midnight, crushing some, and lighting others home. We shall have very little premonitory warning of his immediate approach; we know not when he comes, we only know that he will come with the unexpected speed, as he will burst

upon us with the dazzling splendour, of the lightning itself. And "immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken"—all thrones, principalities, potentates, dominions, shall be darkened, shattered, disorganized, broken. Then he says, "He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." And because the day and the hour are not known, we are therefore always to stand ready. And the apostle expresses the same prophecy of Enoch in another formula, when he says, "The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." He proclaims the same prophecy in another shape, when he tells us, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall

be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day"—the two aspects of the prophecy constantly presenting Christ made welcome by his own, in whom he is to be admired, while he will be manifested and dreaded by his enemies, and unexpected by those who know not the gospel, and who shall be the conscious victims of an irretrievable destruction from the presence of the Lord.

But the phase of the prophecy on which Enoch dwells is its more awful one. He says, "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds." Who are these ungodly, who will be the subjects of this judgment? Very true, they will be the profane, the blaspheming, the atheistic, the infidel, the immoral: quite true, these will be among them. But those whom Enoch specially specifies are not such only; they are "the ungodly." Now who are the ungodly? Thousands are ungodly, who in all the relationships of life are most exemplary. Many a

consistent father and excellent husband, good master, obedient servant, loyal subject, is each an ungodly man. God has selected here, not those who we should instantly conclude must be the victims of such a consuming judgment, but a class to which so many unconsciously belong, a class whose sinful peculiarities are so delicate as to be perceptible only to the spiritual eye. They fancy all is right with them, because they are not what other men are—adulterers, drunkards, thieves, and such like. The ungodly are just those who have no constant governing sense of love, loyalty, or responsibility to God. They are exemplary and excellent in all the relationships of life, but are overruled by no influence whatever that comes from God. In short, they would be precisely what they are at this moment, if there were no God above, and no eternity before. If they are honest, they are so constitutionally. There are men constituted by nature with such a nice and keen sense of integrity, that they would not be guilty of the least dishonesty on any terms, or under the pressure of any inducement whatever. And there are other men who have so sensitive a sense of what is kind, and generous, and

loving, that the keen instincts of their nature melt their very hearts into sympathy and love. It is their nature. They cannot help it. All this is most beautiful. Far be it from me to say anything that might be misconstrued as depreciating these almost unwithered flowers of Paradise—these fair blossoms that relieve the almost universal winter of the social system. What we say is, beautiful as they are, they are not enough. There is a relationship to God that ought to be first, greatest, chiefest; and this ought to be, while the others ought not to be trodden down. They even will be the subjects of the predicted judgment, and the first subjects, who are praised by men, but unknown to God—"I never knew you;" who have been right in every earthly relationship, but wrong in this heavenly one. For this privation there is no compensation. Suppose a colony were to revolt from the parent country; and suppose that colony, after its revolt and wilful separation, were to be characterized by everything that is good and peaceful and right internally—its homes happy, its people obedient, and its laws observed, and everything in its condition all that can be desired in a prosperous and happy

land. Suppose these people, through their officers, to plead with the parent country from which it has wickedly revolted, as their apology, that it had every inner excellence and quality and character. This would not vindicate their rebellion. And so with us, it is no excuse for having left our relationship to God, that we maintain our relationships to each other; because if we observe the last six commandments of the decalogue perfectly, yet the first four commandments are surely not given simply to be broken. If we should be able to plead at God's judgment-seat, "All the last six commandments of the decalogue we have kept perfectly," God will still ask us, "But what have you done with the first four? You have been just to your neighbour, you have been sober in yourselves; but you have not been godly, that is, maintained and fulfilled your relationship to me, as you were bound by my law and your nature to do." The ungodly are moral without religion; their virtues have earthly, not heavenly roots. Wherever there is real religion in the heart, of course there is morality in the life; and if there be not, the religion supposed to be in the heart is a pretence and a delusion. But

there may be morality in the life of a certain kind, without religion in the heart. All religious men are moral, but all moral men are not religious. And therefore, the men who are specially singled out here, are just that very class which we are least likely to think in danger, because it consists of those who are everything that is beautiful and just in the relationships of time, but who have no affinities with the everlasting; who live just as if there were no world to come, who have no sympathy with God, no felt relation to eternity, whose character, in short, has not one element in it created by a deep and pervading sense of love and responsibility to that God who made us, and gave his Son to die for us. Thus we can understand alike the guilt and nature of the class singled out here as the first subjects of the visitation; and if they perish, what shall be the end of the rest?

There are indeed but two great comprehensive classes that constantly exist, and that will turn up at the judgment-day just as they have been,—the godly and the ungodly, with their shades of character. At that day all distinctions are either merged in this, or they are barely appreciated by Him who sits upon the throne of

judgment. We are so prone to intrench ourselves within a party, or a sect, or a denomination, and to fancy, just because we belong to that party, and are surrounded by the laws and the bulwarks of that sect, that therefore we cannot be wrong; that we need frequently to be informed the distinctions which God recognises are those which ecclesiastics never deal with; and the distinctions that will last and live and appear sharp and clearly defined at the judgment-day, are these,—the godly and the ungodly, the saint and the sinner. The bound-lines that we draw, will all be swept as wave-marks on the sea-sand by the flowing tide; but the great bound-lines that have been since Paradise, will last till the judgment-day, and will appear again. It is not therefore an outward name, however musical, that will shelter us. It is not a mere connexion with a class, a party, or a sect, that will save us. The question at the judgment-day will not be, whence we come, or what we are called, or of what family we are; but who we are, and on whom we stand, and whether grace—sovereign grace—has transformed us.

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more anxious to belong clearly and unmistakably to the class of saints, than to some sub-lunary coterie, or ecclesiastical distinction or order, upon earth. The only two successions that have never failed, that began in Paradise lost, and that will reach the very margin of Paradise regained, are sinners by nature, and saints by grace.

In this solemn prophecy, it is predicted that he shall judge them for all their ungodly words which they have ungodly spoken, and for all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed. A word once spoken goes on repeating itself for ever, a deed once done never can cease its reverberations in this dispensation ; by a law of science the word that now comes from my lips will be reflected and reverberated round and round the globe, till hushed at the eve of the judgment-day. Our senses are so blunt, that we cannot perceive the more delicate vibrations ; but that does not make those vibrations cease to be. This will explain a thousand statements in the word of God. At that day we shall hear with awful dismay, if among the lost, the guilty words we spoke, the unholy whispers we breathed, and the vibrations of all the deeds

we have done, loud, clear, and ringing ; the very atmosphere will be the register and even whispering gallery of all we said ; and the very earth, the page on which will be written all we did ; and we shall see ourselves at that day reflected and repeated from all things around us. If this be so, if all the ungodly deeds that ungodly men have done, and all the ungodly words that ungodly men have spoken, are to come up in retributive responses, in manifold reflections, what a solemn meeting will a judgment-day be ! But their sins will not come up on a judgment-day to God's people. There is a voice that " speaketh better things than the blood of Abel," and that is the blood of Jesus ; and that sound will absorb all sounds of sin and sorrow whatever : and there is an efficacy in that precious blood, so real, so vital, so powerful, that it will cleanse the earth as it cleanseth the heart from all the traces and the records of our transgression. Nothing but the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus will stop the resurrection of our sins, or deaden and destroy the echoes of our evil. Nothing but pardon now can extinguish the certainty of our meeting, and meeting in dismay, our sins and our transgres-

sions again. Do we desire that that word once spoken by us, which we would give all the world to recall, may never rise from the dead, let us appeal to the voice of the blood of Jesus that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. If we wish that that deed which we have done, the lineaments of which are engraven upon memory, and the reflection of which is upon the earth on which we tread, a dark and ominous spectre, and upon the sky on which we look, a deepening cloud, though our blunt senses cannot now see it; if we wish that the original should be blotted out from memory, and that the reflection may be blotted out from the earth, behold the blood of Jesus Christ that "cleanseth from all sin." If we will not take the gospel's grand provisions, we must make up our minds to hear, reverberating in everlasting crashes of thunder, words that we would not now should be heard for worlds; and to see, revealed in the lightning in which the Judge comes, deeds that we would give worlds now to be expunged for ever. They that will not accept the gospel of Jesus, must meet him as they are with the deep graven lines of their transgressions upon them, and the dread reverberations of their own un-

godly words around them, saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these, ye did it not to me;" "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This is the only alternative. We must be Christians, or brave the issue.

Every day as it closes brings us nearer to the time when this great prophecy of Enoch will be realized. Scenes are coming successively within the horizon that the most casual observer cannot be blind to. I expressed my conviction that in 1848 the seventh vial began to be poured out; that there was then the commencement of "the great earthquake," when "great Babylon" should come "in remembrance before God;" and when the kingdoms of the earth should be disorganized, to make way for a kingdom that cannot be moved. (Rev. xvi. 17—21.) The first shock of the earthquake occurred in 1848. We are just upon the eve, as far as one can gather from the shadows of coming events, of a more terrific one. Ask statesmen, ask those who are competent to give an opinion, what they think of the aspect of continental Europe at the present moment. There is not a kingdom over the continent that does not rock; there

is not a throne in Europe that is any more secure by being defended by bayonets than it was before; there is not a population in Europe that is not at this moment seething and restless under an undefined impression of possibilities that cannot be, or under an assured conviction of the need of events and changes that they think ought to be. Very solemn is the period at which we stand. Very soon, in all likelihood, Europe will be blazing around us, its cities the volcanic mouths and craters of the pent-up elements of ruin. Very soon, days of trial and of trouble such as have not been since the beginning will overtake us. When they do come, none will stand the ordeal of that day but they who are Christ's people, not by name, but in deed and in truth.

And while there are many things that will be very dark in that day, one can see, striking through the gloom, rays of bright hope and of coming glory. That very earthquake that will disorganize kingdoms, bury proud capitals, and agitate the world, carries with it, like a millstone into the sea, great Babylon that pollutes the earth. I have no more fear that the Romish

Apostacy will gain the supremacy in this land, than I have that Mahometanism will. I believe it is now plunging in its last spasmodic convulsions. It will, like a dying maniac, put forth its most tremendous energies in its last struggle, but its fury is the evidence of its last moments; in spite of all, it will go down like a millstone into the sea, and shall be heard and seen no more at all. And the Jews will begin to look at their long-lost home, already setting their hearts upon Palestine. And Christian men will begin more than ever to let go the distinctions which they have worn, and to think only of the glorious and lasting and vital features that characterize and stamp all the people of God. But amid all the havoc and obscurity of coming conflict, we can see—and therefore we lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh—emerging from beneath the horizon, the Sun of righteousness, and about to rise with healing in his wings to them that fear him, and still look for him the second time, without sin unto salvation.

The nearer that the time for these things is, the busier we ought to be. If we want to keep our estates, let us lay them out. If you want

to be rich, give. If you want to be strong, expend your strength. If you want to be really built up in your faith, try to build up others in their most holy faith. The shorter the time that remains, the more we have to do. Charge every hour that lasts with intenser feeling. Crowd into every day that remains acts of greater beneficence. Concentrate every energy, seek to be useful, determine to make men better for your having been in the world. The light will soon be out, the day will soon be done, the night cometh when no man can work. And if we be God's people, the nearer we are to the Lord's coming with ten thousand of his saints, the more busily we shall be getting ready to meet him. Blessed is that servant whom, when his Lord cometh, he finds toiling in his Lord's vineyard, and in his Lord's employment. And then, blessed result! as the issue of it, all creation shall be emancipated from its bondage. The repressive curse that weighs down Eden beneath us, and prevents its bursting out into flower and blossom, will be removed; the desert will become green, the wilderness will blossom as the spring of Paradise, and nature will be fairer in her last robes than she was in her first. And, in

the next place, the brute creation shall be restored and emancipated from their bondage. The whole creation, says the apostle, groans and travails in pain, waiting to be delivered. Man makes use of the bad instincts of the brute creation—in instincts from beneath, not from above—in order to promote his own sinful or thoughtless purposes ; but a day comes when these, too, shall be repaired, “ and the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. And they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Then, too, the sons of God, when the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, shall be manifested ; the tabernacle of God shall then be with men ; God shall then wipe away all tears from all eyes ; Enoch’s grand prophecy shall be lost in John’s

grander Apocalypse ; the genesis of Moses shall be merged in the re-genesis of the Revelation ; all things shall be made new, and God will again appear in the midst of a better Eden, and speak with man at eventide, no longer a refugee from him under the consciousness of sin, but his son, his friend ; reclaimed, restored, regenerated,—all things made new. When the Lord shall thus come with his saints, taking vengeance on them that know him not, may we be spared and kept, as a man spareth his son that serveth him, and be found among his jewels on that day.

CHAPTER XVII.

ENOCH'S CREED.

“ ‘ There is no God,’ the foolish saith,
But none, ‘ There is no sorrow :’
And Nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.

“ Eyes, which the preacher could not school,
By way-side graves are raised ;
And lips say, ‘ God be pitiful,’
That ne'er said, ‘ God be praised.’ ”

“ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him* : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”—HEBREWS xi. 6.

THE apostle draws the inference embodied in these words, from the statement he had made respecting Enoch, who was translated, and who had this testimony, that he pleased God. The inference he makes from this is, that if Enoch pleased God, he must have had faith ; that same faith which he, the apostle, had in Christ the Saviour,—for without faith, it is impossible to please God. Without this grace, whatever excellency we may have, we cannot please him. We may be the most learned, the most eloquent, the most wealthy, or the most renowned, it matters not,

without that faith which gives to every grace its excellency, to all fruits their flavour, and to all flowers their tints, it is impossible to please God. It is faith, however, not in a proposition, but in him who proposes it. The faith of a Christian is not built upon a series of arguments that make out a certain conclusion; but simply upon this, Thus saith the Lord. We accept the proposal, not because we can prove it,—this the mathematician does; but because God says it,—this the Christian does. We may prove a proposition contained in Scripture on independent data, and there is no sin in doing so; but we must never let go this inner and vital fact, that we receive the proposition simply because God says it, and upon his authority alone. Faith, then, is not in reason, nor in the church, nor in authority, nor in antiquity, nor in numbers, nor in the fathers; but simply in Christ Jesus, than whom there is none other by whom we may be saved.

Without this faith, it is impossible to please God. The very question, “What must I do to be saved?” has only one answer to it, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” or, Have faith in the Lord Jesus

Christ, and thou shalt please God. If, then, without faith in him it is impossible to be saved, without faith in him it is impossible to please God. Christ is the way in which Enoch walked, and without believing in Jesus we cannot enter upon that way which Christ is. Without faith in Christ, we are not in the way that leads to heaven ; we cannot, therefore, walk with God ; we cannot, therefore, please God.

Without faith in Christ, we cannot have that natural disposition which is declared to be "enmity to God" extracted, and that true disposition which is declared to be love to God implanted in its place. The apostle himself tells us in his Epistle to the Romans, They that are in the flesh, they that are carnal, unconverted, unregenerate, cannot please God. Between God and us, in such a state, there can be no coincidence of walk ; there can be no unity of design ; there can be no harmony of nature ; there can be no identity of object : we are at issue ; we are opposed to each other : and until a man be regenerated by that Holy Spirit which is given only to them who believe in Jesus, and ask that gift in his name, it is impossible that he can please God. So that, to please him, or to

walk with him, we must have a change in state that is secured by the righteousness of Jesus, and we must have a change of nature which is produced by the power of the Holy Spirit; and without that change of state which introduces us to a new way, and that change of nature which gives us a new love and aim and end in walking in that way, we cannot please God.

But the apostle gives the reasons and the grounds for his conclusion, in these words, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Let us look at these propositions thus early received: first, at the belief that God is; secondly, at the belief that God is a rewarder; thirdly, at the character of those who exercise that faith; who thus like Enoch believe, and accordingly "come to God," and also "diligently seek him." We have three great propositions: first, God's being; secondly, God's being, discovered to man's faith, developed in God's bounty, in our belief that he is a rewarder; thirdly, the nature of faith analyzed and explained by this description, that he who has it comes to God, and that he diligently seeks him.

The first proposition that comes before us, as the object of faith, is this: God is.

We are not left wholly to the Bible for the conclusion that God is. Conscience from its depths protests against the atheistic wish, No God,—“The fool hath said in his heart, No God.” In the depths of man’s conscience, even, when it is most diseased, there is felt—not seen, but felt—a law; and if a law and penalties, a law-giver who gave the law, and will inflict the penalties. Man’s conscience comes to the conclusion—that there is a God, try to distort it, fend it off, keep it down, as he likes; every man knows that there are moments when fears, hopes, and trembling anxieties about the future and his relationship to God, bubble up from the depths of the conscience, and indicate the terrible chaos of thought, feeling, and anxiety that are below.

Not only does conscience say, There is a God; but there is scarcely a nation upon earth that has been discovered, even in the most barbarous nooks of it, that has not some idea of some one superior to man, who controls all, and who may be, and ought to be, propitiated by man. They may have very wrong, very

absurd, very corrupt conceptions and definitions of God; but that they acknowledge the existence of a God, or of something superior to man, is the result of every inquiry into their circumstances. It has been often thought that a conviction so universal, that has lasted so long, must be true. If it were not an instinct in the human heart, it would have been worn out long ere now; but because it is an instinct that God has implanted and fixed there, and made part and parcel of our very constitution, our prejudices and passions and depravity have never yet served, or succeeded, in utterly excluding it.

Creation, also, testifies to the existence of a God. Wherever we find a house, there we infer there must have been a builder. Wherever we see a watch, we infer there must have been a watchmaker. Wherever I see a creature, I argue there must have been a Creator. There is immense philosophy in that psalm, "He made us, not we ourselves." Wherever, then, I see effects, there I must believe there has been a cause. This book of nature is torn and defaced in many places; but still, even on its most mutilated and defaced fragments, I can

see lingering, unquenched, and unquenchable remains of the glories of a God. Creation tells us there is a God. All its elements, from the pebble on the sea-shore to the planet in the sky, preach there is a God. From the flower by the wayside to the sun on his meridian throne, all things great and all things small, silently, but irresistibly, teach, There is a divinity that stirs within them, who made and shaped and still maintains them. Truly, it is a fool, intellectually as well as morally, that concludes, or even wishes, No God.

It is impossible for the very highest creature, even an angel, to come to the conclusion that there is no God. All that any creature can do—the very utmost that he can reach—is to say that I have not been able to discover anything within the limited range of my experience, that satisfies me that there is a God. He must be a very stupid or a very wicked man, not to have discovered in his own exquisite organization,—in that heart with its thousand strings so accurately tuned and kept so wonderfully in harmony,—the great Creator must have originally made it. He must be a very stupid, or, if not, a very depraved man; but at best no one can

come to a conclusion broader than this, that he has not been able to discover that there is a God; for how does he know that just ten yards beyond the horizon that he has spanned there may not be the legible demonstrations of a God? how does he know that just twenty yards beyond the ground that he has explored there may not be something that says, There is a God? The man that asserts, There is no God, must be able to say, I have pierced the earth, and bored all its strata; I have swept the firmament, and penetrated all its mysteries. I have sounded every deep, and risen to every height, and searched every star, and analyzed every object. In other words, the man that can say, There is no God, must himself be God, which is an absurdity, and an inconsistency; for if finite, the very space that he had not penetrated may be the very lesson-book that tells, There is a God. And, therefore, all that a man can say is, "I have not been able to discover him;" if he has not been able to discover there is a God, even within the range of his own experience, we repeat it, he must be very blind, or very unwilling. The eye alone, that pure mirror, the ear also, that wonderful chamber of sound,

the hand likewise, as one has proved in one of the Bridgewater Treatises — these and every other fragment of the human frame reflect and indicate a God ; and tell us, that God is.

But Enoch goes further—a Christian by faith believes that there is a God. In other words, he accepts the existence of a God, not as the conclusion of a process of reasoning, but as a proposition announced by God himself. He accepts the Bible as God's book. He believes God's testimony respecting himself ; and, therefore, by faith he believes that God is. To his circumcised ear, every doctrine in the Bible is the mind of God ; every precept in the Bible is the will of God ; every promise in the Bible is the bounty of God. He sees God in all things ; he traces his footprints in all paths ; he hears his Father's voice in all dispensations. He believes not, as some do, that God was ; but he believes, as saints do, that God is ; not only being, but actually operating ; not that God created things, gave them an impulse, and left them to themselves ; but that God created all, and that what philosophy calls the laws of nature are but the continuous touches of God ; that what philosophy calls the forces of nature are but

the evidences of God's power touching all, re-tuning all that is deranged, and controlling all. Hence, a believer sees God in all the providences that occur in all the chapters of his history. In all great catastrophes, in all little incidents, in the upheaving of a kingdom, in the overthrowing of a throne, in the turning of a corner, the Christian believes that God is. By faith he believes that God is. A child of God feels that he is not a victim of accidents, and chances, and changes, and random vicissitudes. He is embosomed in God, and God is embosomed in his deepest and dearest convictions. It is with him no naked, abstract piece of philosophy, Thou, God, seest me; but it is with him his innermost, his dearest, his deepest thought, Thou, God, seest me. Justified by the righteousness of Jesus, washed in his blood, guided by his Spirit, he loves to be with God, and desires God to be with him; he sees all things in God, and God in all things, and the wide world's intricate mechanism "working for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose." And thus, the faith of a Christian that God is, places the creature in his lowly place of adoring humility, while it

recognises God in his lofty sovereignty, and exclusive supremacy, as the Controller, the Guardian, and the Guide of all. Enoch believed not only that God is, but that he is in Christ the image of God, "God manifest in the flesh." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten." The mere naturalist sees a God in nature; the mere legislator sees a God in law; but by faith we see more clearly, what Enoch saw more dimly, that God is in Christ not governing the world only, nor enunciating law only, but reconciling the world unto himself. It is only in Christ that we see God in all his glory, his attributes in perfect harmony, and just as he is—God just, while he justifies the sinner that believes; God holy, while he takes the guilty one that comes to him to his bosom. This spectacle, this vision, is only to be seen while we stand, where Moses stood, on the everlasting Rock, and let the Lord pass before us, as he proclaims himself the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Only from God in Christ can we hear these words, "I, even I, am he that blot-

teth out all thine iniquities." Only of God in Christ can we read this, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Only from God in Christ can we hear these words, "Come, and let us reason together; though your sins be like crimson, they shall be like wool; and though they be red like scarlet, they shall be white as snow."

By faith, we believe that God is in nature controlling it, in law guarding it, in Christ reconciling us to himself, and blotting out all our trespasses. By faith we receive a vision of God's being, infinitely brighter and more glorious than any mirror of that Being that nature can furnish even to those that extort her deepest secrets, or that law can utter to those that listen with the holiest and the most attentive ear. In nature God is, but above us; in the law God is, but against us; in Christ God is, but Emmanuel, "God with us," our Father and our Friend.

But by faith we not only believe that God is, or God's being; but we believe, too, in God's bounty, "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

We often misinterpret the word "reward." Reward is not the consequence of merit, but the sequence of work. We are not told here that we merit, and therefore get the reward; but that we work, and the reward is graciously vouchsafed to us. Where the word "reward" is used by the sacred penmen, work, but not merit, is always implied. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; for to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Thus speaking of reward, he teaches it may be given by grace, as well as by work. We read in another passage, "The reward of inheritance;" but if it be inheritance, it cannot be deserved. "God said to Abraham, I am thy exceeding great reward." Now, says the apostle, "Abraham was justified, not by works, for then he would have had something to glory in, but was justified by faith." It is called "reward," to show that Christians do not enter heaven indolent men; but, on the other hand, it is said to be by grace, to show that they do not enter heaven as meriting or self-righteous men. They run, they strive, they fight, they labour; yet

they get to heaven not because they do so, but through Christ ; and yet without doing so, they do not enter into heaven at all. Two things are plain: unless we strive we shall not enter ; unless we labour we shall not obtain ; unless we sow we shall not reap ; unless we fight we shall not be crowned. And yet, we are not crowned because we fight ; we do not reap because we sow ; we do not obtain because we labour ; but we are saved by grace from the first pulse of life to the first enjoyment of glory. The reward, therefore, is by grace, and not of works. The devils believe ; but, not having a promise of a reward, they tremble. We believe in God ; but, having the sure promise of the reward of the inheritance, we rejoice in hope of it with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There may be much in the faith which thus believes in God, and believes, not that he *shall* be, but “ that he *is*, a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” to perplex the Christian. David, who believed this very proposition, that God was “ a rewarder of them that diligently seek him,” was yet so perplexed when he saw the wicked prosper, and the godly suffer, that he exclaimed, “ Surely in vain have I washed my hands in

innocency. It is plain that God is not a moral governor ; that God is not the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. I have suffered for my religion by the scorn of foes, because I hid it not ; but all this is entirely in vain, because God is not a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But he waited ; he went into the sanctuary ; he listened to what was preached, and read there ; and he discovered that, in spite of appearances, " God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ;" for " They are brought into desolation, as in a moment ; they are utterly consumed with terrors." They are placed in slippery places ; and though for a moment the sun may seem to shine upon them, it is only that the darkness that speedily comes may seem the more terrible. We see, too, an ancient prophet who was perplexed and thought that he was cast off ; but who, when he read and pondered God's word more, said, " Though the labour of the olive should fail, and the fields yield no meat, and there be no herds in the stall, and every thing should proclaim that God is not a rewarder of them that diligently seek him ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation." If present

appearances ever indicate to us, as they sometimes do, that God is not a rewarder of piety, let us recollect this is not the day of judgment, but the day of grace. God suffers the wicked occasionally to prosper. In God's dealings with us, he frequently afflicts, not to gratify revenge on his part; but for our good. And very often God's hand may be heavy, when God's heart overflows with love. Very often the blackest cloud, that seems to us to be a perfect eclipse, may conceal behind it, or may be itself the vehicle of, benedictions that are destined to burst upon us. You must not judge that God has ceased to be, and to be a rewarder of them that seek him; because present appearances are not what we think they should be. God deals on a large scale. He arranges things for great, magnificent, and worthy issues; and often it is necessary that his people should suffer for a season, before they rejoice and be exceeding glad with their great reward in heaven. Yet a Christian's most afflicted hours are often his sweetest and most blessed. The day-time with all its splendour has but one sun; but when the sun sets, and the night comes, the whole sky sparkles and

glows with innumerable stars. A Christian's day-time has but one sun ; but a Christian's time of sadness, depression, and affliction, often reveals to him glories in the height and blessings at his feet, that he never conceived, still less calculated upon ; and, at all events, whatever be our present state, patient continuance in well-doing is followed by glory ; and we who are believers may yet say, " Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing." But rich, or poor, obscure or renowned, Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, bond or free, God is—where we do not see him ; faith implies the unseen, or it is not faith ; God is, even when we do not see, even when we see the contrary—faith still believes " that he is—a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." And when perplexed by the inexplicable opposition to this by occurrences that seem utterly to frustrate it, the Christian falls back on what the Lord said, " What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Let us look at the way in which this faith is explained—" they that come to him." The Chris-

tian is a person that "comes to God," he is a person "that diligently seeks him." What does this imply? When we read that one comes to God, we see phraseology borrowed from the ancient temple service. The Jew, before he could present his sacrifice, had to come to the temple physically. He must come from a distance to the mercy-seat, the glory between the cherubim, the high priest, and the ever-present God. The phraseology of the New Testament is in this borrowed from the ancient ritual of Levi; and hence the Christian who believes in God is said to "come" to him.

The word "come," implies that we are by nature at a distance from God. We are described by the apostle as "far off" from God: by nature it is too true we are not near to God. Sin by its projectile force has cast us out from the presence of God. In this distant position, we are not only far from God, but we are disinclined to go to God. We are worse than far off; we are enmity and opposition to God. So strong is this enmity to God in the bosom of the most amiable, the most gentle, the most courteous and accomplished by nature, that it needs Omnipotence to

overcome it; for "no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The lost sheep needs to be gone after by the shepherd, and, when the shepherd has found it, would you not suppose it would gratefully follow him till it reached the fold? Alas! before that lost sheep, after it has been found, can be brought back to the fold, it must be put upon the shepherd's shoulder, and carried home. We need not only to be discovered, detected in our hiding, to be found by the Shepherd who first seeks us; but in every step and movement of our journey forward, to be carried on the shoulder of him that has discovered us. In other words, we need not only omnipresent love to search for us in our hiding; but we need omnipotent power to carry us home, before we can reach the fold. A Christian who believed, who was converted, thirty years ago, needs as much grace to keep him right this year, as he needed to keep him right thirty years ago.

We need grace to put us in the right way, and we need no less the same grace to keep us there. The impression, and the semi-atheistic notion, of some is, that God formed the world, gave it a projectile impulse, and that, from the

force of that impulse, it has rolled in its orbit ever since: and some Christians seem to fall into an analogous error—that God set them going thirty years ago, and that now they must continue under their first momentum in the same way of their own strength. God created the world, and he controls it. God discovers the sinner, and conducts the sinner home; he acts, as truly as acted. The heart beats, not because God wound it up and set it going, but because he touches it every moment; and the regenerated heart loves, not only because God set it loving, but because he keeps it loving all the day long. In him, by nature, we live and have our being; in him, by grace, we live, and move, and have our redemption. We need not only to be discovered in our distance from God, but to be sustained at every step in our journey home to God.

But how are we to come to him? There is but one way; there is no name under heaven but one: “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Christ suffered for sin, “the just for the unjust,” to bring us to God. “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;” and “we have boldness by a new and living way,

which he hath consecrated for us by his own blood." Hear, then, this great truth, that there is but one way to heaven. Christianity is most exclusive in one respect: it is most large, liberal, and comprehensive in another. It proclaims with earnest exclusiveness, There is but one way to heaven. It matters not how near to it you are, or how often you may cross it; if you do not walk in it you cannot reach heaven.

We must come to God by Christ, the way, the only way; and, coming thus, and thus only, we learn that he is. The gospel is not a theory; it is experience. 'They that come to God learn that he is. How precious is this! We go to God with the supposition that he is; we retire from God with the demonstration that he is. We go to God believing that he is; and we remain with God experiencing in our hearts that he is. Thus, experiment leads unto experience; experience leads unto more faith; faith leads unto assurance; and assurance unto quietness for ever. The true credential of Christianity is in the believer's own bosom. No man ever read the Bible diligently, dispassionately, prayerfully, without detecting, scarcely latent, under every leaf of this Tree of Life, the evidence of the

glory and the inspiration of God. No man ever earnestly ventured on Christianity, trying to make the experiment of its reality, without experiencing, in the long run, that it is the wisdom of God, and that it is the power of God unto salvation.

I must notice another definition of this faith. It is, we “diligently seek him.” We are to seek him with the whole heart. Seek him with the same intensity with which men seek profit in business, success in their efforts, honour, or whatever else the world sets out in pursuit of. Let us seek God as diligently, as earnestly, as the world seeks its own.

We are to seek him, first of all, in his own blessed word. The Bible is the oracle of truth, the very likeness of God. It is the exactest mirror and representation of Deity; not in stone, nor carved in wood; but in eloquent words, pure, vivid, living ideas. This blessed book you may reverence, love, appreciate as gold, you may taste as having the sweetness of honey; you may do everything in admiration of the Bible, but worship it. Roman Catholics have worshipped images, and statues, and rags, and relics, and even human heads—is it not strange

that they never thought of worshipping the Bible, which, after all, is the truest likeness of God? They dared not worship it; because, if they made the attempt, fire would have rushed from the mouth of this witness, and revealed to their confusion, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This blessed book is to be loved, to be cherished, to be studied; but not to be worshipped. We can hear in it God's voice, as Adam heard it among the trees of the garden at eventide. It is that holy land over which we may walk, not needing a priest to keep us from falling. It is that deep, unsounded, and luminous ocean, the bed of which is covered with gems for us. Let go your cathedrals, your confessions of faith, your articles, your liturgies, your psalm-books, your hymns, every thing you have; but let go the Bible only with your life. It is the noblest bequest that God ever left to man. It is the right and privilege of saints; we must never give it up till we enter that blessed place where the Bible will be superseded, and we shall be no more taught from letters at second-hand, but from the lips of God, our Father, himself.

We are to seek God, not only in the Bible, but in the sanctuary. Seek him in the preacher's sermon, in the reading of the chapters of the Bible. Seek the sermon that is truest, purest, and, in the sermon, Him who ought to be its text, the golden thread that runs through the whole, and gives its beauty and its cohesion to all. Do not hear the sermon in order to be pleased with it, or in order to criticise it, or in order to make comments on the preacher. The preacher's motive is not to lead you to his house, or to himself, or to his church, but to his God. That sermon which does not lead you, directly or indirectly, by inference or by prescription, to God the Saviour, is something very deficient, and needs to be studied again. You are to seek God in the sanctuary; seek him in the sermon, and if, after patient and prayerful waiting, you do not find him, go there no more; for the living bread is not there.

Seek him diligently by prayer. What is prayer? Not counting beads, or saying Ave Marias, or repeating Pater-nosters; still less making any or all a penance to man, and a propitiation to God. Nor are we to make prayers to be seen of men, in corners of the streets;

but because we have a deep sense of need: we are to pray just as that need dictates, or inclines. And whenever we pray in the congregation, in the school-room, in the prayer-meeting, we should use simple words. When men are in earnest discussion about a subject, they speak simply. I can bear bombastic sermons; but turgid, loquacious prayers are to me most offensive. A person who expresses deep feeling, does not beat about for high-sounding words; he uses instinctively the plain old Saxon words, that exactly and readily suit his purpose, and convey most shortly and vividly the meaning they are charged with. Pray simply. We cannot speak too naturally to God.

Seek God at the communion table. Because some have deified the Lord's supper, let us not go to the opposite extreme, and destroy it. Because some have worshipped it, as if it were a god, let not us trample it under foot, as if it were an absolute rite. The poor Israelites in their caprice one day worshipped a brass serpent; on the next day they broke it up, as if it were a thing of nought. We are not to cast away ordinances as if they were useless, nor to worship them as if they were gods. If we seek

God aright in the sanctuary, we shall not only find him, but we shall be so absorbed by our sense of the magnificence of the God that is in it, that we shall put into its lowly but just place the ordinance that reveals him.

We are to seek him in the world outside, in providence, in all the events of history, in all the chapters of individual biography; in the sunny spots of human life, in its darkest eclipses, in its most solitary nooks; when his blessing lights upon us, and when the cloud envelopes us; in all our joys, in all our sorrows. Seek him in the world he has made, into which the serpent indeed has entered, but over which God will yet reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. God is in all things. God is, in spite of all appearances, the rewarder of them that come to him.

Having thus explained the faith, I will show how it pleases God.

Such faith as that which I have shown, implies a deep sense of one's own insignificance; therefore God is well pleased with it.

Secondly, this faith makes a man own that he has lost God, that he is far from him, that he must be diligently sought; and, therefore, he

runs to him, and diligently seeks him ; and God is well pleased with it.

Such faith empties man of all conceit in himself ; makes him own that he is blind, and poor, and naked, and that no creature can satisfy him, that no created thing can give him comfort ; and such faith owns that God is able, all-sufficient, and all-willing to reward them that diligently seek him, and to manifest himself to them that believe in him. And without this self-emptying, self-denying, God-glorifying, Christ-magnifying faith, it is impossible to please God. It matters not, if we present him thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, if we give him our firstborn for the sin of our soul, if we were to make the most weary pilgrimages and the most torturing penances ; all are utterly worthless. Without faith which confides in him as a Father, believes in him as a God, looks to him as a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, it is utterly impossible to please God. To please him is the noblest and the purest aim, and the most profitable ; for " whatsoever things we ask," says John, " we receive them ; because we do those things that are pleasing in his sight ;" and if we please God,

“he will make our very enemies to be at peace with us.” Thus, it is worth pleasing him, not by doing anything to propitiate him; but by walking with him as a child walks with a father; not as a slave with a tyrant master before whom he cringes, or as a maniac with his keeper of whom he is constantly afraid; but as a child with a parent, in whose face he sees sunshine, and in whose footfall he hears the most welcome music, as Enoch walked. Thus walking, and thus believing, we please God, and are accepted of him, through Christ Jesus, the only Saviour of this illustrious member of the Antediluvian Church, and of all who believe, till the end of time.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BABEL-BUILDERS ; OR, UNSANCTIFIED JUDGMENTS.

“ Nor deem the irrevocable past
As wholly wasted—wholly vain,
If, rising on its wrecks, at last
To something nobler we attain.”

“ And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.”—GEN. xi. 4—8.

I HAVE presented elsewhere in explanatory remarks those geographical, and, if I may use the word, ethnographical criticisms, which cast some light upon the mere history of the chapter which I have now read. But it is important that we should look at God’s word, not only in the light of history and of science, but also in that light which shall make it practically

improving to our own hearts, and lives, and consciences. Therefore, I proceed to draw from the whole of the historical statement we have seen, those interesting and important spiritual lessons with which all Scripture is charged, and which it needs only patient and prayerful investigation to educe for our comfort, edification, and progress.

How true is God's portrait of humanity after the Flood! how true was his portrait of humanity before it! Before he sent that overwhelming judgment, he, who could not be mistaken, said, "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil, and that continually;" and after the Flood had swept the earth, and punished the guilty, and saved by a special miracle them that loved him, God, looking still to man's heart, said, "Though the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart be still evil continually, yet I will not send another Flood to destroy the whole earth." You have humanity sketched before the Flood, and the crimes that then prevailed are the evidence how truly God spake. You have humanity sketched after the Flood, and the daring and impious experiment described in the eleventh

chapter of Genesis, is the evidence how just that portrait was.

We see from all this that the visible church and the true spiritual church are not co-extensive. It was only the visible church that was saved in the ark, they were not all members of the true spiritual church. Noah, and his wife and children, were the selected group saved by God's special providence, and by a specific miracle, from the desolating judgments that overwhelmed the rest of the world; but in that little group there were some who were saved temporally, but not spiritually and eternally; for no sooner do they escape from the ark, than, forgetful of all past mercies, despising all existent signs, they start again an experiment of impiety and wickedness only equalled by the folly in which they were permitted to conceive it. So is it still. In the smallest church all are not truly converted men. All that pass through baptismal water are not regenerated, just as all that were saved by the Flood were not saved by the Holy Spirit of God. He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; he is not a Christian who is one only baptized. There needs an inner work to make us members of the inner church, just as the outer

rite can make us members of the outer ecclesiastical community.

A very important lesson is taught here,—mere judgments are unequal to sanctify the heart, wicked men do not become better by the judgments that befall them. In short, the visitation that overtakes a person, has its fruits according to the prior character and heart of that person. In the case of God's people, all afflictions are chastisements, sweetened and sanctified to them. In the case of those who are not God's people, afflictions have only a hardening effect. It is the inner state of the individual prior to the affliction, that determines and surely predicts what shall be the practical moral effect of that affliction. There is nothing in suffering, however severe, or however long, that is essentially sanctifying, otherwise the penalties of the lost would end in the purification of the lost. There is nothing in any suffering that can root out the fibres of the old heart, or neutralize its inherent poison. The Spirit of God only can do so. Affliction to the believer is mercy; affliction to the unbeliever is penal, and not paternal in any respect. We see this in the case of those who escaped in the ark; what they had lost

—for they had all lost friends and relatives—had no sanctifying effect upon them.

In looking at this historical fact, it is worthy of remark, there was no sin in building the tower—that was not the sin—there was no more sin in building the Tower of Babel, than there was in building the Pyramids, or any of the steeples of London. The outer act was not in itself sinful; the construction of a city was rather a desirable thing; it is the seat of refinement, and of human progress. In the outer act itself there could have been nothing that was sinful. Wherein then did the sin lie? The same outward act may differ in moral character in different circumstances. It is the heart behind the hand that decides the nature and the character of its work; it is the aim, the motive, the end, that indicates moral character. One man may build a church, and yet there may be no piety in the act; another man may build a play-house, and there may be no impiety in it. It is when the work is in itself neutral, that you are to determine its moral character by the prior moral feelings of the artisan, or the mechanic, or the genius that devised and constructs it. In building this tower, the sin was in the

aim, the end, and object which they had in view. Let us investigate what these were, and then we shall be able to calculate the moral nature of the workmen engaged in this enterprise.

We have only to listen to the original invitation,—“Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name,” that is, get national celebrity or national glory,—to see that this was their grand, predominating, and absorbing object. But has this actuating motive perished or been buried amid the ruins of the Tower of Babel? Alas, it has not. How many study, not in order to be useful to man and serviceable in the cause of Christ, but to get a name! Many an author writes books, many a senator makes speeches, many a statesman constructs cabinets, many a soldier draws the sword, many a sailor walks the deck, not from patriotic motives, or with Christian designs, but to get a name. As Dr. Chalmers well said, “Each of us has his tower of Babel, which we are continually building, and never learning wisdom from the experience of the past.” It is no evidence that the thing is good to say that any of these things—to be a soldier, a sailor, an author, a preacher, or an

orator—is good in itself: we must mark the aim, motive, and object in view. It matters not what the thing be, if it be not in itself sinful; but it does matter what our end, object, and aim are in doing it. There may possibly be less sin in building a play-house to obtain a name, than in building a church for the same end. In building a play-house to get a name, it is the world's workmen doing the world's bidding to obtain the world's applause; but in building a church to get a name, it is adding hypocrisy to the world's crime. Many a one founds an hospital, not because he loves man the more, but because he loves his own name better. Another man builds a college, not because he loves the education of the young, but in order that his name may be mentioned with praise by the youth that are to study there. In the old mediæval ages, they built churches and monasteries in order that they might have masses said for their souls; but in our days we build colleges, and found hospitals, not to get masses said for our souls, but to get praises added to our names: and all the difference is, that they did their acts for superstitious ends, and we do ours for sceptical ends—both are Babels, that,

built or building, will perish and overwhelm the builders in their ruins. How much more beautiful is the description of our blessed Lord,—when you found hospitals, when you do alms, when you build colleges, take heed that “ye do not these things to be seen of men,” that ye do not do them to get a name; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when ye do your alms, sound not a trumpet before you, or, translated into modern language, do not put a paragraph in the newspaper; “but when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” How intensely expressive! Let us do it so purely from a right motive, so truly to a right end, so thoroughly in the right name, that there shall be no alloy of any other end or motive whatever. When we reflect—the best and holiest of us all—on all the side-ends and by-ends, the sub-motives and under-objects, that we have in view in the best things we do, in the purest things we devise, in the noblest acts of sacrifice we make, we must all bow before God and say, “Enter not into judgment, O Lord, with thy servants, for in thy sight no man living can be justified.” It is therefore too

true that the Christian, if he does not build a Babel with the precise Babel ends, and on the literal Babel foundation, yet has designs that have the old alloy, just as our language has in it the traces of the old confusion — it is not merely that our language testifies to the disruption at Babel, but our hearts testify to it too. How often do we see one apparently wrapped and absorbed in what is Christian, who yet has no Christian motive at all! I have seen the mountain eagle almost beating the blue firmament with his outspread wings, and I have thought, as I gazed at his magnificent ascent, that he was soaring towards the sky and the realms of purer and of brighter day; but I had only to wait a little to find out, that though he seemed to soar so high and aspire so purely, his bright eye was upon the quarry all the while, that was on the ground below. So it is with many a one, with loud pretensions, high-sounding profession, great Christian aims avowed and declared, while he seems to be soaring upward with his outspread wings, and seeking a loftier sphere and a nobler land, he is really looking down to what will bring the greatest profit to his purse, or the noblest credit to his name.

Thus we have the Babel spirit mixing with us, thus we have Babel motives still actuating us.

But there were more defects than these in the conduct of the Babel-builders. One great defect was, they left out all thought of God. It was, perhaps, well that they did so, because their object was bad ; but still, if the object had been perfectly good, to leave out all thought of God in undertaking so magnificent a scheme, was, to say the least of it, extremely atheistic. But do we not in some degree inherit this ? We look at means, and money, and talent, as if these were the only things, and we forget that means, money, talent, will all be blasted, if they are put in the place of God. How often do we undertake missionary enterprises, and new schemes of philanthropy and usefulness to the poor, or for the spiritual enlightenment of the benighted, and forget that the end is to be achieved, not by the multitude of means, or the weight of money, or the splendour of patronage, but directly by the blessing of Almighty God ! No scheme can prosper, from which this element is exhausted, and no right scheme will fail, however meagre at its commencement, in which this element is truly and heartily recognised. “ I shall die in

my nest," said one, and he found it otherwise. "Soul, take thine ease," said another, "thou hast much goods laid up for many days," and that night his soul was required of him. "Tomorrow shall be as this day," say some; "I shall multiply my days," say others; and their inward thought is that their houses shall continue, and their names shall be upon them, and yet the Lord has decreed, "Except the Lord watch the city, the watchman watcheth in vain." It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Thus, one of the Babel sins was leaving God out of the enterprise. Let us ask ourselves, Do we leave out God in our enterprises? or, Do we introduce him into all? We are not only to die in the Lord, but we are to live in the Lord; and those who hope to die in the Lord, should know that there is no likelihood that this hope will be realized, except they now live in the Lord. It is right to marry, but it is a Babel marriage unless it be marrying in the Lord. It is right to live, but it is a Babel life unless to live be Christ. It is necessary to die, but such death will be an ominous one unless

we die in him in whom we live, that is, in the Lord. We have only to read the chart of history, to see that, whenever nations have forgotten God, God has sooner or later forsaken them. How much have we seen of this, to go back no farther than 1845! In that year the Babel spirit made the whole nations one vast speculating body. Soon afterwards, God looked down, and confusion and wreck fell upon all. Soon after, we thought we could defy the seasons, and have bread, and plenty to spare; God looked down, smote the element in which we trusted, and all was confusion again. In another year, we thought we had made such progress in all our sanatory arrangements, that we might repel triumphantly the incursions of pestilence and plague; God looked down, another year and a nation's heart almost stood still with terror. In 1851, some were predicting a millennium, who had been talking of it for ten years before; and others were enjoying, as we all properly enjoyed, the spectacle of peace, which we hoped to be the earnest of peace with all the nations of the earth: no sooner did 1851 close with the hopes and pledges of peace, and the interchanges of love, and 1852 begin, than

war, and rumours of war, and preparations for war, were heard on every side. How earnestly is God teaching us to guard against the spirit of the Babel-builders, and in our anticipations, our arrangements, our schemes, and enterprises, never to forget to add, in spirit if not in letter, "If the Lord will." By this I do not mean that we are to proclaim these words on all occasions, in our intercourse; but that in our thoughts there is to be the under-current of feeling, "If the Lord will;" in all our conversations the under-tone, "If the Lord will;" in all our schemes, and enterprises, and prospects, the inner feeling, "If the Lord will;" in other words, admitting all other elements that are good, but never excluding the element that is essential—God's glory, God's presence, and our dependence on him, and responsibility to him.

But, perhaps, in these Babel-builders there was worse than simply leaving out God; there was, I fear, not simply atheism, which is being without God; but there was, I fear, antitheism, or opposition to God. They knew God's ordinance, which was, that they should go forth according to the arrangements made with Shem

and Ham and Japheth, and cover and replenish the whole earth ; but they did not like to go forth upon unknown lands, and into strange latitudes ; and therefore, though they heard sounding in their ears the bidding of that God who had saved them from the deluge, they determined to defy his thunders, to brave his threatenings, and to build a tower which should be a rallying centre for the earth's population to gather round ; and so high, in all probability, that no second deluge, which they supposed possible, should reach its top ; and so strong, that no hostile force should be able to overturn it. Leaving out God is atheism ; acting contrary to God is antitheism. But they found that whatever is attempted against God recoils upon them who make the attempt. One cannot read the history of the past, or any department of that history, without seeing that, whenever man has dared to provoke the controversy, whether he or God shall prevail, Babel confusion has been his doom, and the manifested glory and sovereignty of God the great lesson ; it may be, not permanently, but surely and deeply taught.

At all events, whether it was hostility to God, defiance of him, or simply omission of God and

forgetfulness of him, there was in their whole scheme thorough unbelief. God's word told them that there should be no second Flood, but their wicked hearts said, We do not believe God's word, and therefore we will make preparations to meet a contingency still possible. God's word again told them that, as often as they saw that sacramental symbol span the firmament, and display its beauteous arch, they should have a pledge for their assurance, not for God's, that no second Flood should come; but they said, No, we will not believe that sign, and therefore we will act just as if there were no such promise confirmed by any such pledge. Do we ever feel and manifest this spirit? There is in the Lord's supper a standing pledge, like the rainbow, that Jesus suffered, and that God spared him not, but delivered him up for us all. Do we, notwithstanding, sometimes doubt that fact, and feel as if God had never given a Saviour. God says, "Behold, the Lord cometh: he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him." Do we not sometimes doubt, and say, "Tomorrow shall be as this day," and, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers

fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning?" Such is the unbelief of the Babel-builders, and if their sin be ours, for retribution exists on earth as truly as it will exist hereafter, their punishment will be ours also. Whatever is undertaken without God, or in disbelief of his word, or in defiance of his power, will never prosper. In national constitutions, in national legislation, in the foundation of palaces, and in the building of cottages, in drawing up great charters for a people, and in writing small leases for a house, the true element of coherence, strength, endurance, safety, prosperity, honour, is the recognition of God, and in so recognising him, the feeblest shall be strong, the fewest shall be conquerors. All Scripture, confirmed by all history, shows that institutions laid in God are lasting as the stars, institutions built in defiance of him perish and dissolve like frost-work in a night. Let us therefore carry, into the sequestered nooks of private life, what we ought to see developed in the greatest and most conspicuous places of public life—a sense of dependence on Him who looks on. Let the merchant sit down at his desk with as solemn feeling as that where-

with he sits down at the Lord's table. Let him enter his counting-house with a sense of responsibility to God, as real as that with which he enters the sanctuary; and let him write his ledger with just as deep and sensitive a mind, as that with which he reads his Bible. I believe that a besetting heresy of the day is not Calvinism, nor Arminianism, nor any other ism, but the practical separation of what is religious, and what is secular. I never can accept such separation. Education without religion is no education at all. Business without religion is Babel-building, and it will have a Babel issue. So minute is the requirement of God's word, that he says, "Whatever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." But the besetting and the very popular idea is, religion is religion, and it is fit for the church; business is business, and it only is fit for the market. Most certainly, do not carry your business into your religion, and make religion a matter of profit and of loss; but you ought to carry your religion into your business, that your business may be beautiful before God, and just and honourable in the sight of man. When we come to the sanctuary, we come to be taught

what religion is, and how deep, and how high, and how far religion ought to reach. When we go out into the counting-house, the market, the warehouse, the place where mammon's traffic is, we set out to show how religion can make us to differ. The merchant who drinks in the lessons of the Bible on the Sunday, will not go to the Royal Exchange and preach there; but he will in his transactions make it be felt by others that there is such honesty about that man, such integrity, right-heartedness, and truth, that he must have some spring to feed it, some hidden manna, some source of persistency and power that we know not of; we will go where that man goes, his people shall be our people, and no doubt also his minister ours. The minister who has some twenty or thirty thorough Christianized men going forth into the world, acting out their Christianity in the world's business without show, pretence, or talk, or cant, or anything approaching to it, will soon have a crowded congregation, because other people will inquire into the secret of this superiority to all around, and they will go to learn where and what that secret is, and they will say at last what some said to the woman of Samaria, "Now we

believe, not because of thy saying ; for we have heard him ourselves.”

We learn another lesson from the Babel-builders ; whatever man attempts without God, or in spite of God, or in disobedience of God, or in disbelief of God, in order to attain a given end, is almost sure to issue in the opposite. These men set about building this tower to do what ? To “get a great name,” to become the illustrious engineers and architects of the world, so that after-ages should quote them as men of the grandest genius, and the greatest powers, and their name should be pronounced with veneration when their dust was sleeping in the grave below. That was their design, this was their object—did they accomplish it ? Instead of gaining an illustrious name, they are by-words ; when we see some wild enthusiast fail, we call him a Babel-builder ; when we meet a fanatic attempting some wild scheme, we say, he is a Babel-builder. They have got fame, but it is the fame of contempt ; and the fragments of their tower, and the memorials of its erection, still endure, to show that they who set out to get reputation in spite of God, will only get shame, discredit, and contempt. But this was not their

only object—they had another in view. It was to prevent themselves being scattered over all the face of the earth; it was to be a central rallying tower to retain the unity of the masses. Did they accomplish it? Just the reverse—the very thing they deprecated was the very thing they provoked. The very scattering that they raised the tower to prevent, was the very scattering—violently and not gently, as it would have been—which they really brought in all its severity upon themselves. How truly does Obadiah speak of them when he says, “The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.” God resisteth the proud, he giveth grace to the humble. We do not need a space of five hundred yards to build our Babel; in many a nook and sequestered place is a tower of Babel attempted still. Who has not felt, more or less keenly, when you have set your heart upon something, without taking in the sense of God’s presence, or your respon-

sibility to him, or the contingency that he might interpose, and when you have gained the very thing that your heart was set upon, how often it has proved another thorn in your pillow, a corrosive and a cankering care in your heart! Many a man has set his heart upon making a fortune soon, without a thought about God, not by taking means that are dishonest, but atheistic: he steadily sets his heart upon the enterprise, and God allows him to succeed. What is the result of it? Just after he has made the fortune, he is laid upon a sick bed from which he never rises. I have seen this in its extremest degree, when the fortune was magnificent, beyond counting. Or you have set you heart upon a fortune, and you have obtained it, and learned how unsatisfactory it is, and that you have been spending your money for that which looked like bread, but which is not bread, and your labour for that which you thought would satisfy, and, lo, it satisfieth not. Many have made a competency in which all seemed to be prosperous and merry as a marriage bell, and the greatness of their wealth occasioned them such torment, disputes, bitterness of heart, and anxiety of mind, that they have wished to God that they had never had a

fortune at all." I heard of one who set his heart upon riches with all his might—an irreligious, atheistic, ungodly man: he made the fortune, and one day he was met going to commit suicide—such was the satisfaction it afforded him. Whatever we attempt against God, or without God, either will be contradicted in its issue, or if we obtain that which we had in view, that object will be a thorn, a calamity, and a curse. A crown reached in the face of God will be but a burning circlet; a throne, or a presidential chair, attained by violation of the laws of God will be but a restless seat; reputation and renown achieved in the spite of God will be poor enjoyment to him who has it. That little word "God," the exponent of a grand element in a man's heart, gives vigour to the hand that wins the fortune, and it gives repose to the heart to enjoy that fortune after it is won. Therefore, merchants, tradesmen, soldiers, sailors, all men, whatever be your position on earth, or your profession, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you. How beautiful is this! It is like the law of gravitation—all falls under it, clusters around it, becomes holy and pros-

perous just by its being in the heart and actuating all.

All humanity is suffering under the curse incurred by the Babel-builders. We need not quarrel with that great law of God's providential dealing, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. You need not say, it is unjust. I do not stop to discuss its justice; I assert simply, it is a fact, and a fact written in the Bible, and acted out in providence every day. The question is not, Is the thing true? for we feel it; and therefore to quarrel with the Bible for asserting it, is to quarrel with God's word for speaking truth. These Babel-builders began their tower in defiance of God, or in unbelief of God; their tongues were confounded; literally, they became no longer of one lip. This judgment strikes us; for every missionary who departs to preach to the heathen, goes out cramped and scathed by the curse of Babel. He has to sit down three or four years to learn the language, and, after he has learned it, we know too well that the speaking with foreign idioms, and with all the deficiencies of foreign habits, to a heathen people, is presenting the gospel with the least element of power, and in its least fa-

vourable aspect. We have in our experience every day to deal with the great fact before us—the confusion of tongues. And what is the cause of most men's quarrels? Not so much that their hearts are really at issue the one with the other, as that the language in which they unfold and express them is misunderstood the one by the other. Whenever we hear great ecclesiastical quarrels between bishops and presbyters, synods and general assemblies, we hear the undertone of Babel in the midst of all—the quarrel is less about things, and more about modes of expression. In the case of Calvinism and Arminianism,—hear a truly converted Arminian and Calvinist pray together, and we shall find that they pray the same; hear them preach, they preach very much the same; and we find that their logomachy is rather in the terms employed—that it is a Babel dispute—that they are at heart really and vitally one. The reason of our quarrels generally is more in our expression of our meaning, than in our meaning itself. Every man has not the power of expressing his thoughts. Some men have such power of speaking, that they can speak for hours without a particle of meaning. Other men have great

stores of thought, but such inability to utter it, that they cannot speak five minutes fluently. And when we know what mighty varieties there are between these two extremes, we shall learn to forgive those that differ, and lament the Babel curse that is found in our divisions, and we shall pray for what I now refer to, that future and coming Pentecost, of which the last was but an instalment, when, not the earth shall be of one tongue, for that would be monotony, but when all men shall speak all tongues as they speak their mother-tongue, and then there will be unity and peace. Pentecost came only in the first drops; the great shower, I believe, is yet to come. At Babel, separation was the curse; at Pentecost, separation was turned into a blessing. At Babel, men were scattered mechanically by the different tongues that instantly broke out; at Pentecost, men were morally united, though mechanically separated. Let us then pray for that blessed Pentecost, when God shall pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and all shall see eye to eye, and all shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of his children.

How truly do we see at each stage of the book of Genesis, God's presence—God reigns.

He taught mankind, that though man had sinned and the world had strayed, yet he had not given up the reins of government, nor had ever left all to chance. I have no doubt that the Babel-builders fancied that God, having satisfied his justice, as they would call it, by the deluge, had returned to repose, and left the world to manage itself; but he interposed to show that he held the reins, that he is throned above the floods, and that he will restrain the wrath of man, and make the remainder of it praise him.

Unity in itself is not necessarily a blessing. The Romish church boasts always of its unity. Now there never was a finer specimen of unity upon earth than the unity of the Babel-builders. They were all of one tongue, they were all of one mind, they had all one purpose, and they set to work shoulder to shoulder to accomplish that great enterprise. Therefore, mere unity is not necessarily a blessing. It is what men are united in, that is the main thing, not the mere fact that men are united. Better differ in the details of a holy enterprise that we seek to accomplish, than be united in a wicked enterprise, on which we have set our hearts.

Where there is unity without truth, there is only conspiracy. Where there is unity in truth, there is no doubt a blessing. And certainly, when bad men combine, good men should always try to unite. But, never forget, our union will be in the ratio of the truth that we hold, and only through the truth can we be made one; for the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then it is peaceable.

And in the next place, let us learn from this, too, how inefficient a channel of truth tradition is. They had no Bible in those days; they did not perhaps strictly need one, men lived so long—for it seems that even after the Flood the patriarchal ages of the antediluvians were continued, gradually lessening until the days of Moses—that truth had every chance, if I may use the expression, of remaining undiluted; yet these builders had lost every vestige of truth, and departed from every announcement that God had made; they atheistically lived and atheistically perished.

Let us set our hearts upon building, not a Babel, but on building up living stones in the holy temple of the living God. Let us also anticipate that “city that hath foundations,” for

Babel had none, “whose builder and maker is God:” which hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof: in which there shall enter nothing that defileth, and the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; and in which the descendants of Shem, and Ham, and Japheth shall meet, because they have previously met in Christ; and so shall they be for ever with the Lord, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom may we also be builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

“ Onward as we trace
God’s oracles, redemption is the point
To which they all converge.”

“ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
—JOHN iii. 16.

THESE words, “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,” constitute at once the very simplest, and yet the most comprehensive summary of Christian truth in the whole word of God. It is the centre and the circumference of all Christianity. The most precious truths are folded up in it as in a beautiful and living bud, and they are only developed and expanded in all the pages of the writings of evangelists, the epistles of apostles, and the preaching and sermons of faithful ministers of Christ Jesus. It was the faith of Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah.

Its truth was in their hearts, as in ours. It was the creed of the Church before the Flood.

It assumes one great proposition which all Christians admit,—that the world is in ruins. The Church before the Flood saw the ruins. I do not stop to dispute, or to try to gauge the measure and the extent of these ruins. It is one of the plainest propositions in the word of God, that all have sinned, that all are involved in one common catastrophe, that all are perishing from God, “by nature children of wrath, even as others,” without any distinction of any practical value as to a future and eternal state. The imaginations of man’s heart are evil. This same book reveals another truth just as plainly, and as distinctly; a fact brought out before the Flood also—that man cannot recover himself; that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; it is still less in man that liveth to quicken his own dead heart. It reveals in the plainest terms, that for 4000 years before the Christian era, and for 1800 years since, society has been attempting to regenerate itself, and it has all along been a gigantic failure; and the only evidences of progress, the only traces of advancement, are those patches of beautiful sunshine which are the di-

rect or the indirect rays of that Sun of righteousness who has arisen with healing under his wings. The only prescription which the Bible urges now, or ever urged since the Fall, for this great calamity, is faith in him whom God promised once, and has given since, and by faith in whom we have eternal life. Nothing better was ever conceived by man; nothing more is required by God. We need what we may have, salvation through the blood of Christ; nothing less will suit the greatest saint, nothing more is needed for the very chiefest of sinners. "God so loved the world, that he gave" this, which alone is adequate—"his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But before we open up these words, I pause a few minutes in order to meet difficulties that occur to oneself, and to others that do not venture to express them, and that have been urged by those who reject the gospel as reasons why they must refuse it at its very commencement. It has been said, Might not God have saved all this vast expenditure by simply preventing man from sinning, and the earth from falling? We answer, What God might have done it is not for

human wisdom to decide; what God can do is not my rule of faith, but what God has written in his blessed and holy word. These are speculations in which we are lost the moment that we try to fathom them. But still there are some thoughts that may modify the force of such an objection, wherever its weight may be felt. God did not make man as we now find him, nor the earth as it now is. If we believe the Bible, the very reverse is the fact. The whole Church before the Flood is my proof. God made man at first perfectly holy, and equally happy, and the earth so beautiful, that he, in whose sight the angels themselves are stained with imperfections, and the heavens unclean, pronounced it, then and there, to be "very good." No man can say where sin came from, nor tell how it is in the world; yet we ourselves know, because we feel, that it is in the world: but we are thoroughly satisfied, that whatever source it came from, it came not from the bosom of God. God is not responsible for it. It is a jar in the glorious harmony, a foul blot on his fair and beautiful workmanship, it is not his doing; but—bright and blessed prophecy!—this discord shall yet be resolved into harmony, this dark blot shall

be fully expunged, and the earth shall look forth more fresh, and beautiful, and glorious, than when first it came from the plastic hands of him that made it. In the second place, in looking at this objection, it is necessary to observe, man was left to the freedom of his own will. If God had created man with a disposition to sin, with an inherent liking and bias to it, the responsibility would seem to me, with our present information, to have rested upon God; but so far from making man with a bias to evil, he made him perfectly holy and happy, with every possible dissuasive from doing evil, and with every conceivable inducement to persist in the love of God, and in allegiance to his law. True, God might have made man a machine; he might have made him inanimate or unfeeling like a railway engine, the groove of which he had settled, and the course of which was as sure and fixed as rising sun and setting stars; but this would not have been man; such a being would have been below even the brute. God made us with glorious sovereignty, invested with absolute freedom of will, free to retain our allegiance, free to abjure it. Because man was made so great at his original creation, he was left therefore so free in his elec-

tion of the good, or his preference of the evil. And therefore when any complain that God did not make us otherwise, they complain that God gave us what they now insist upon as their supreme and noble prerogative,—freedom, independence, election of the good, or election of the evil. In the next place, it may turn out—nay, we know from Scripture it will turn out, that greater glory will redound to God, and greater good to the vast universe, by permitting man to fall, and providing for man such a recovery, than if God had made man in the way, and after the type, which we have so faintly indicated. But will not some of the human race perish for ever, whereas if man had been made otherwise, none would have been lost? But why do they perish? Not one soul, as far as we are concerned, will be lost, except for neglecting or rejecting the great salvation; and therefore, if man perishes, he goes to perdition with the responsibility resting wholly upon himself. Not one soul will Satan be able to present throughout eternity as an exact trophy of his success in seducing Adam and Eve from their first allegiance. Every lost soul in misery, as far as relates to us, will be there a conscious, deliberate,

guilty suicide, one that rushed to perdition in spite of a thousand remonstrances that urged him to turn and flee to God for safety and for forgiveness. It may be, that what has taken place will end in greater glory to God, in greater happiness to the creature, than if man had been made, what we think he would have been so unnaturally made, a mere machine, and incapable of any originating movement from within. Another thought deserves our consideration: this world is one amid ten thousand, or ten thousand times ten thousand. We do not believe that those vast orbs which the telescope brings within our vision are empty, or solid, or mere masses of matter only. It is probable there are worlds far greater than our own, teeming with vast populations; and it may be, that what is done on this orb, like what is enacted in Westminster with reference to the whole empire, is done on one great and royal spot, that the rest of the orbs of the universe may learn new lessons of the love, the mercy, the justice, the forbearance of God; our world may be the lesson-book of the universe, the instructress of all creation. If this be so, we may discover that there was a wisdom, and a love, and

a goodness, and a propriety, if we may use that expression, in what has taken place, which does not strike us at first sight, but which we shall spend eternity in learning, ever as we turn over a new leaf of the everlasting book, and make a new step in the endless progression which is our happy and blessed destiny.

The whole provision of the gospel, we read, is exclusively of God. Man never conceived it, nor ever devised it. The great law of the gospel economy is, man shall receive all the benefit, God shall receive all the glory. It is a religion that came from God, and therefore it will carry man back to God. We never should forget, that only a religion that comes from God will ever conduct the creature to God; the origin of this religion of ours is announced in the sentence, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

These words lead us to conclude, that such and so great was God's love to sinners, that he was ready to stoop to any sacrifice short of the sacrifice of holiness, justice, truth, to redeem us. He saw a race self-ruined, weltering

in its ruins, unable to restore or reinstate itself in its lost orbit. He longed and desired to save it. His first emotion toward us was that of paternal love; what renders this love the more striking is, that He—the offended party—first loved, and made the first movement toward those that were the offending and the unrepentant criminals. This is the greatness of that love, that he who justly was angry, who justly might have consumed us, loved us—loved those, whose only desert was penalty, whose only merit was punishment, whose extinction from the universe would have never been felt, whose accession to the choirs of the blessed can add no splendours to God's throne, and give no happiness additional to God himself. Yet this sacrifice, whatever it was, as we proceed to explain, he was prepared to make as the exponent of his love, and to open a way for the egress of that love, that we—rebellious sinners, ruined, careless, thoughtless, perishing—might become the subjects of an everlasting salvation.

If God so loved us, and so intensely desired to save us, why did he not do it at once? There was a great difficulty. The Bible tells us so,—for the Bible is not simply the statement of proposi-

tions, but an appeal to our judgments as to the reasonableness of those propositions. The whole Epistle to the Romans is not simply a proclamation of great truths, but it is a vindication of those truths to man's judgment, and in the hearing of man's conscience. This difficulty would seem to be something of this kind : how God should receive to his bosom those that had fallen and sinned against him equally with those who retained their first and pristine allegiance, and served and glorified him to the end. How shall God manifest himself the just Sovereign of the universe, the holy Governor of all its orbs, and yet look upon the guilty with the same complacency with which he looks upon the innocent and the unfallen. It would be a sorry law that has no fixity ; it would be a no less sorry law that has no rewards and punishments. You say, God is omnipotent. So he is ; but although he can save a sinner in spite of sin, he cannot save a sinner in spite of his own holy law. God cannot cease to be good, and just, and holy, and faithful, and true. The grand difficulty is met, and mastered, and solved in the great fact enunciated in these words, " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Grant the propriety of the principle of a substitute, and all is plain: but whether you grant its propriety or not, it is certainly declared in the Bible as fact, that Jesus Christ took upon him our whole responsibility, stood in our stead, and dealt with God, and God dealt with him, as if all humanity had been compressed, and personated, and represented in him. I am not discussing the propriety of this, or whether it commends itself to our conscience or not, because it is fact, yet a fact that has analogies and shadows in the world, that one may be a substitute for another in some things; and if in some small things that come within our horizon, why not in that great thing which appertains to the word of God, and the salvation of lost humanity? But whether our conscience approve it or not, it is true, that he, the spotless Lamb, arrayed himself in our tainted fleece; that he, the Holy One, was treated as if the greatest sinner; that he who was infinitely pure, endured all that we incurred as transgressors, obeyed and did all that we owed to God as creatures; and by reason of what he

suffered, our sufferings are dispensed with ; and by reason of what he did, our doing, as a title, is completely superseded, for his is ours. In Christ's death we have deliverance from the curse. In Christ's active obedience we have a title to the blessing ; and by God so loving us, as to give such a sum to be the expression of that love, he has made a provision by which he may be seen to be just ; for he has not shrunk from inflicting the penalty denounced upon a single sinner ; and holy, for he is seen so hating sin, that even when that sin was upon the only begotten Son, he spared him not ; so true, that the soul that sinned has died ; so loving, that he provided this glorious Substitute, that we, the otherwise hopeless sinners, might go free. I see, therefore, in the gospel, a scheme that commends itself to my judgment as answering all the great designs of God, vindicating his character, placing it in the most beautiful and glorious light, and bringing down to us a salvation inexhaustible as the years of eternity itself.

All this originated from his love. It is not said, that, because Christ has thus endured what we deserved, because Christ has thus done what

we could not do, therefore has God loved us ; but that all Christ did is the fruit of God's love. He loved us, and therefore Christ came ; it is not, Christ came, and therefore God loved us. God loved Adam just as much when he lay amid the wrecks of dismantled Paradise, as when he walked amid the flowers and unblighted fruits of Paradise in its first glory. God's love is the same to-day that it was before Adam fell. He so loved Adam in his first estate, that he clothed the earth with beauty, and made his palace to be the admiration of the universe. He so loved Adam in his ruin, that he gave, as the expression of his love, " his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He so loved Adam in his innocence, that he made every thing a ministry to his pleasure. He so loved Adam in his ruin, that he touched the earth with the blood of his incarnate Son, that poor lost Adam's sins might be forgiven, and that he, the refugee and rebel, might be restored to his lost and forfeited allegiance. That same love that rolls, like an illuminated sea, in the realms of the blessed, one wave of which, sweeping over Paradise, made its immortal soil burst into blossom,

and fruit, and beauty, sent down its richest embodiment when it crowned all its previous expressions by this last and greatest one—the gift of Christ to be our Saviour.

In this provision of Christ Jesus, salvation is possible where it was impossible before ; God's love is accessible where it was inaccessible before ; a door in heaven is opened where there was no door before ; access to God is permitted where there was no access before ; and through Christ the sinful creature, can do what once the unfallen creature alone could do—draw near to God's footstool, and see its Father and its God. It seems to me, therefore, that the provision in the gospel commends itself to the judgment of man, and approves itself to be, what the poor Greek in his folly denied it to be, “ the wisdom of God,” as well as “ the power of God, unto salvation.”

I may illustrate what I mean for those to whom an illustration might be more instructive in this way. Conceive a vast enclosure situated in some central part of the globe ; conceive that enclosure to contain within it, like an hospital, the dying, and, like a churchyard, the dead. Suppose that one in glory, like unto the Son of

man, looks down upon it, sympathizes with the dying, and weeps, as he wept for dead Lazarus, over its dead. Suppose he has resolved, in the might of his sympathy, to retrieve, recover, save it, if it be possible. He comes down from that height of splendour in which he dwelt from everlasting—"the Man that is God's fellow"—to this enclosure of the dying and the dead; he approaches one gate, and he asks if he, the Omnipotent to save, may be admitted, that he may save; and the sentinel of that gate says, "My name is Justice; all within have been weighed in the balance, they are found wanting, and none may approach to deliver them." He applies at another gate, and at that gate is another sentinel, whose name is Holiness, and his answer is, "They are fallen, sinful, polluted. All outside is the region of purity, all inside is the region of corruption and of sin; and they cannot be permitted to breathe that holy air, and to gaze upon that unfallen spot where you have been, and where I am." He approaches another, where he finds Truth. She replies, "I have said it; I proclaimed on Sinai what would have been true if I had never proclaimed it; what is not true because

I have proclaimed it, but what would have been true if it had never been heard by mortal ear; 'The soul that sins, it shall die.' These have sinned, and die they must, and live they cannot." This Visitant returns to his celestial abode, and he puts the question there, "What is to be done?" and the mighty problem conceived by infinite Wisdom, and originated from sovereign Love, is made known, that God will deal with these dying and dead ones by a Substitute, and if one can be found who will appear in their stead, and exhaust the penalty that they have incurred, and obey that law, that infallible law, which they cannot obey, then they shall go free. That heavenly Visitant returns to the same place, and there goes outside the camp: he suffers, and weeps, and bleeds, and dies; and after he has done so, and risen from the grave, and ascended to his Father and to our Father, to his God and to our God, he proclaims what is done; and Justice replies, "I am satisfied; the gates are opened;" and Truth replies, "I am satisfied; let the gates be opened;" and Holiness replies, "I am satisfied; let the gates be opened;" and one mighty pulse of love, from

the heart of all love, thrills through every grave ; and one mighty wave of healing, from the Fountain of all healing, rolls through every breast ; and the dead live, the diseased are healed ; and mercy and truth meet together ; truth, and righteousness, and peace kiss each other ; and there is salvation for the worst of sinners, in a way and by a process that reflects the greatest glory upon Him that “ so loved us, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

But I have viewed the provision very much as a channel by which God’s love can come forth to us, or as a provision in which holiness, truth, and justice form themselves into a channel by which God’s love may reach us. I view it as more than this. The gift of Christ is precious, not only for what it conveys to us, but because of what it expresses and embodies to us. The gift of a Saviour teaches me two things : first, that it is possible now for God’s mercy to reach me, and to forgive me ; and next, that God so loves and longs to save me, that to convince me of the height, and length, and breadth of that love, he gave as the exponent of it—his only

begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what am I taught by this? I am taught by this blessed provision, in its first aspect, that I may be saved, admitted into heaven, numbered with those that are there, but still, it may be, a stranger to God, and God a stranger to me, tolerated in heaven as one legally acquitted and no more; but I am taught by this provision in its second aspect, that I shall be welcomed into heaven, that I shall be received, not as a servant, but a son; that I shall not only be acquitted by a legislator legally, but accepted by a Father with all the expressions of paternal love; and that I shall be in heaven, not merely as one legally there, but as one whose admission into its realms shall start long-slumbering songs, and be responded to by sympathy from God and all the holy ones who have preceded me to glory. And thus the gift of a Saviour is not only a channel along which it is possible for God's love to reach me, and along which it is possible for me to reach God, but it is also to me an index, or evidence, of the richness of that sovereign love that God bears to me, a poor sinner. "God so loved us." What immensity of meaning is condensed in that monosyllable "*so!*" "He so

loved me, that," in the language of St. Paul, "he spared not his only Son." What that relationship of Son is, we know not; we can form no just conception of it; and the greatest light is cast upon it when we leave it to shine in its own untouched magnificence and glory. God's love to stars, and flowers, and created things is one thing; God's love to angels is another thing; God's love to sinners is different from both; God's love to his own Son is something so unique, so peculiar, so raised above our apprehension or the reach of our sympathies, that all we know is, that when God spared not his own Son, he showed in so doing a love at which an apostle who had been in the third heaven, unable to fathom it, exclaims, "O the height, and depth, and length, and breadth; it passeth understanding!"

Let us notice here the expression, "gave." Every word is instinct with meaning. It is not said here, that he "permitted" his Son to die. It is said, "He gave," or, as it is expressed by Paul, "He spared not his only begotten Son." That expression alone is a shadow of the height and depth of that love.

When he gave Christ, he did not compel an

unwilling being to become a substitute for us, but he gave one who rejoiced to take our place, whose love was the same as the Father's, and who rejoiced to array himself in our responsibilities, and to die for us, that we might never die. I have always felt that the Socinian who denies the Deity of Christ, most consistently denies the atonement of Christ—I mean, the atonement as we understand the word to mean ; for it seems to me, that if Christ were a mere creature, there has something occurred in the dispensation of God inconsistent with the revelation he has given of himself. If Christ were a mere creature, most innocent, and spotless, and holy, as the Socinian ever admits him to be, then how can you explain this fact, that the holiest being in the whole universe was made by God himself to be the greatest sufferer in the whole universe ? The great law of God is, that holiness is perfect happiness, that sin is misery. Then, how happens it that the holiest being, who justly came under the law that perfect holiness is perfect happiness, has not merely become through man's wickedness, but by God's direct arrangement, the greatest sufferer ? It would seem, that if Christ were not God, his dy-

ing was worth nothing as a substitution or an atonement; he had no right to lay down his life. A creature's life is not at his disposal. A man who commits suicide is just as guilty as one who slays another, that is, if he be in possession of his mind. I have no right to lay down my life for another, however much I may love him. But Christ says, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." In other words, he died voluntarily; and the fact that he accepted the death that he suffered; that he endured the cross; that he laid down his life willingly, and not reluctantly, is proof he was God as truly as man—God in our nature, as a substitution for our sins. Thus he died, not a reluctant victim, but a willing Saviour, for us and for our salvation. All his sorrow and sufferings were as much the exponents of his love, as the evidences of his atonement. I need not now dwell on some instances there are in heathen history, and in Scripture narrative, of great love. Barak and Deborah jeoparding their lives in the high places of the field, indicated great love, but it

was for their own. Gideon fighting for the Shechemites, not fearing death, braving danger, displayed great love, but it was for his own. David's love for Absalom was beautiful, but it was for a son. David's love for Jonathan was beautiful, but it was the love of great friendship. But here is the great unparalleled and unprecedented fact, that God loved *us*, that "herein is love, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

Now, what is the result of all this provision? It is, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Whosoever believeth." I have waived all the comparatively paltry discussions in which mere Calvinists and Arminians waste their time, as to the extent of this atonement. May it not be possible in our creeds to hold the highest Calvinism, whilst in our sermons we preach what may be thought Arminianism? May not one preach the sovereignty of grace, and yet unfold the grand provision of the gospel, and man's responsibility for its rejection? Not otherwise shall we present the gospel in its true glory. The high Calvinist gives a profile of Christianity; the low Arminian gives the other profile of it; while he who

neither preaches Calvinism nor Arminianism, but the glorious gospel of Christ, gives the truest view of Christianity. What then does "the world" mean? It means those that do not deserve to be saved; those that have no instinctive desire to be saved; those that were lost, ruined, and undone, and neither were able nor willing to help themselves. Christ so loved these, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. "Whosoever" is the limit. All caste, and colour, and country, and clime, so far as their moral conditions are involved, are obliterated in the provision of the gospel. Those words, "It is finished," rent the partition-walls of ten thousand distinctions. Those distinctions which raised so high their adamantine walls upon the earth, and that still look to us so impassable, are swept away like sand-ridges before the out-flowing tide of that love that gave Christ to die for us. It is a love that can overflow all heights, that can satisfy all wants, that has provided a Saviour for all that will, without exception, without limitation of any sort or any shape whatever.

These words contemplate only two great

classes; those that have eternal life, and those that are perishing — “Whosoever believeth in him should not perish,” — that implies one class — “but have eternal life” — that is the other class.

What is perishing? I have examined the word that is translated “perish,” in various Lexicons, and find one of its leading ideas to be, “to be wretched,” “to be miserable,” “to be undone.” The Greek gambler, when he was ruined, used the Greek word, “perished,” — “I am miserable and ruined for life.” And, therefore, the meaning of this passage is, “Whosoever believeth in him should not be ruined for ever and for ever.” It does not mean annihilation, but “living, lasting consciousness of evil.” It is better to show that there is nothing to prevent our being instantly saved, than to try to induce men to cry, “Peace, peace,” by the wretched sophistry that hell is only a kind of Protestant purgatory, in which they will be purged for a season. It means, perished and ruined eternally, and yet not by a decree of God. The stone let drop from the height, needs not to be impelled by any other than the law of gravitation: it falls to the ground

naturally. The man who was bitten by the serpent in the wilderness did not die because Moses had decreed it so, or because the serpent by its operation made it so, but he died by the very fact that he refused to look at that symbol, looking at which would have given him instant health. Even so, the sinner who is not saved through the blood and sacrifice of Jesus, does not perish by a decree sinking him to the depths of ruin, but, while he rejects Christ, by the very necessity of his case. The effect of sin is distance from God, and the action of sin is to increase that distance more and more, and the meaning of hell is just the endless retrogression or distance from God; just as God's love and salvation are the elements of endless approximation to God; and the definition of heaven is, a ceaseless centripetal attraction, under which the ransomed is ever approaching God, ever drinking deeper and deeper joys, and yet never reaching that infinite and glorious centre; and hence by the very law of the sufferings of the lost, the longer they live, the more terrible their catastrophe becomes. Perishing, has compressed in it an amount of sorrow, and agony, and woe, that many would

pronounce to be exaggeration were they to hear one attempt to unfold and explain it. Are we in this class? We have not to do something in order to be cast into it: we are born members of this class; we are born in this company; we begin to fall the instant we come into the world, and our downward tendency must be met and arrested by the interposition of the truths contained in the gospel, before we can ever return and be numbered in the condition of those I describe in the next place — those that have eternal life; this is the second class.

What is meant by “eternal life”? Those that have embraced the new, and, I think, the most unscriptural theology, say, that “eternal life” means, that those who believe in this will simply live for ever, while those that reject the gospel will after a season be utterly annihilated. Surely this expression, “eternal life,” as used in the Bible, means something more than endless progression of life, or simply ceaselessly living. Did you ever hear it asserted in the Scriptures, or did you ever hear it said by any man, that Satan and his angels have eternal life? Does not the very statement revolt the very deepest and holiest instincts of our nature?

We dare not say, Satan has eternal life; and yet Satan will live for ever and for ever. This "eternal life" does not mean mere endless life, but a nobler and more glorious life,—a life that man lost in Paradise, and that is only found at the cross,—a life that unites to life, and gives responsibilities to which the natural man is altogether dead. A man who has this life, moves in a new orbit; he is under the attraction of a new power; all the affections of his soul are resonant with the songs of the blessed; and his heart beats under the touch of the finger of infinite Love. The Spirit tells him, and the blessed consciousness of it assures him, "We know that we have eternal life."

"This has power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea,
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

Our conscious possession of this eternal life is the element of our greatest happiness. It is not a life that time measures, it is in itself

so peculiar, so glorious, so blessed, that a believer knows what it is, and yet he cannot unfold and explain it to any one besides. It is the conscious possession of this eternal life that makes us meet death as a mere slight interruption in our upward and glorious progress. We feel that when we shall lay down this mortal, we shall leave but a little dust behind us, the abandonment of which only enables us to put forth new wings, and to soar to new realms, and to enjoy in all its splendour and its fulness that life which endures for ever.

But the language of Jesus is, "Whosoever believeth" hath eternal life. The assurance of heaven does not mean that a man leaps from the love and the practice of sin into a sort of Mahometan Paradise, or Pagan Elysium; he that believes on the Son of God has eternal life. It is a personal and present prerogative, and he that has it is conscious of it. If we are destined to enter into heaven, we must carry heaven with us now. If there never has been a little heaven within us upon earth, we shall never enter into a larger heaven with God in glory. Heaven begins in the individual bosom, and culminates in the glory that is to be re-

vealed. The love of God comes to us in the shape of life; it remains within us in the form of life, and that life flowers in everlasting joy and felicity.

These are the two great classes of mankind—those that have from the first Adam naked and perishing souls; and those that have from the second Adam everlasting life. There may be circumstantial, national, ecclesiastical, physical, moral distinctions, but all these are evanescent as the clouds that sweep through the sky. These two great, broad distinctions are lasting as the great bright stars that shine still and far beyond us; they who belong to the company of the lost—and of all categories that is the most awful—or they who belong to the glorious company of the saved, and are now living, justified, and adopted. Let us not look at heaven as if it were all in the future, but recollect it must begin now in the individual heart. All that the judgment-day does, is to perpetuate what is now. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is unholy, let him be unholy still”—that is hell. In fact, Christ continues the impulse that began on earth, and that impulse is everlasting heaven; and Christ per-

mits in them that believe not the impulse that began at birth, and that impulse, unarrested, is everlasting hell.

But whilst there is this broad distinction, let me explain very briefly how one may be changed. "Whosoever believeth."—Then there must be a personal act on our part. No man finds himself in heaven, and is surprised how he ever got there. No man finds himself among the lost, and is startled by the unexpected discovery. Every man knows in his calmest and most solemn moments quite well whither he is going. He sometimes so trembles at his own thoughts, that he will not let himself hear the whispers of his own conscience. Many a man would rather face a foe armed with all the weapons of battle, than his own conscience; and the struggle of thousands every day is to get rid of the monitions of that faithful monitor within—the presentiments, and prophecies, and forebodings of a conscience, that knows quite well whether it be at peace with God, or still a stranger altogether to the gospel. Before this change can take place, you must believe in Christ Jesus. It is, "Whosoever believeth;" not, "Whosoever doeth," "Whosoever suffer-

eth," "Whosoever payeth," but "Whosoever believeth." But, what is believing? Just putting confidence in this testimony of God; it is the acquiescence of the inmost man in this blessed truth, that there is now a provision so glorious, that God's mercy can reach me while it reflects his own glory; that there is now a Saviour, the exponent of God's love for me—why not for me?—and believing thus, I am justified by faith, and have peace with God. It is the simplicity of the gospel that is, unfortunately, shall we say, its greatest stumbling-block. Too many ministers of the gospel, by giving elaborate metaphysical disquisitions on subjective and objective divinity, upon faith, and virtue, and vice, obscure that glorious truth, which comes with the splendour and the simplicity of the sunbeam, "Whosoever believeth in the Son of God shall not perish, but have eternal life." It is just confidence in God, confidence in the testifier, confidence in the testimony. It is coming to him penetrated with a deep sense of our ruin, and with a lively apprehension of the perfection of the work of him who came to save us. But, you perhaps say, Am I quite sure it is for me? The question is, Why

not for me? You are not to sit down, and say, Why for me? but you are to explain and answer this expression, Why not for me? You are a sinner, you are lost, you are perishing. Then you are the very person that Christ came to save; and if you see this, and rely upon this glorious provision, and look for glory, and happiness, and heaven in the strength of it, and say, I will show how thankful I am by how holy I live, and by delighting to do all the commandments of him who loved me, then you have peace. Just as the Israelite dying in the desert looked to the brazen serpent, and that instant recovered, so the sinner, serpent-stung, dying, perishing, in this world's desert, is called upon simply to look at, to believe on, to put confidence in Christ, and to have thus everlasting life. It is just taking God at his own word; it is saying from the very heart, "Amen," to all that God has done.

The great sin that will be the destruction of not a few will be, that they knew this, and despised it; that they heard this, and perished notwithstanding. The text is the first note of the everlasting jubilee; to believe in this is your instant duty. Do not say, "I cannot."

Cannot! You can put confidence in the Bank of England, confidence in your parent, confidence in your brother, confidence in a merchant, and cannot put confidence in God! Are you not ashamed to say, "I cannot believe?" And if you are conscious that you cannot, do you not know of him who said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness," "Ask, and ye shall receive." The consciousness that you cannot believe, is the first pulse of everlasting life; but the declaration of want of confidence in God expressed by "I cannot," is only a deceptive way of saying, "I will not."

Let us not die with bread before us. I believe the most awful ruin is that which begins its descent on Calvary, and at the foot of the cross: the most terrible midnight is that whose twilight begins by the setting of the Sun of righteousness here below. Flee from the wrath to come; be Christians. Arise, and go to your Father, who "so loved you, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

CHAPTER XX.

FAITH AND HOPE.

“ The steps of faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The Rock beneath.”

“ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”—HEBREWS xi. 1.

WE have seen a portion of the “ cloud of witnesses ” in the Church before the Flood. They walked by faith in the days of Noah, as we do now. Faith was the secret of their victory, as it is of ours.

Man can easily understand, in his natural condition, why love, obedience, and truth should be commanded in the Scriptures. These are graces which he can admire, even when he refuses to practise and embody them in his conduct. But the mere natural man, unacquainted with the great truths of the gospel, is unable to comprehend why faith should be made so much of in every part of the gospel. For example, it seems to him rather the ground for an objection

to Christianity, than a reason for its Divine origin; that men should be exhorted so often to believe, and, as he supposes, should be exhorted so seldom to do, to act, to obey. He reads such passages as these, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." He reads again, "The just shall live by faith." He reads also, "Justified by faith, we have peace with God." Again, when the question was asked, in the agony of overwhelming and poignant conviction, "What must I do to be saved?" he reads that the answer was not, "Climb to heaven," nor, "Purchase heaven by your good deeds," nor, "Obey, and be rewarded," as rational men would suppose; but, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And he reads again that, not self-reliance, not courage, not strength, not might, not power, either were or are the victory that overcometh the world; but "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." He cannot understand it. It seems to him evident that the system is not Divine that inculcates a grace which, he conceives, may live and

flourish in its intensest form, without the fruits of purity, truth, and holiness.

We are perfectly aware that faith, severed from love, may be a mere conviction in the head, unproductive of any real good. But, whilst faith, when it is alone as a mere intellectual conviction, and no more, may be worth nothing; yet there is not a grace in the Christian character that has vitality or fragrance without faith. Love severed from faith is a blossom nipped from the branch on which it grows. Duty severed from faith becomes a hard, stiff, rigid performance. Only when inspired, sustained, and invigorated by it, does the blossom bloom in amaranthine beauty, and develope itself in precious truth and duty, and reflect the light of glory in the sky.

It is, however, very remarkable, that Paul, the "apostle of faith," as he has been called, gives the most exquisite definition and illustration of love; and, on the other hand, John, the "apostle of love," attributes most to faith. Who can forget that beautiful chapter, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I

have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith," says the apostle of faith, "so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing" ? On the other hand, when we turn to John, who dwelt so much on love, the apostle that Jesus loved, in whom the human sympathies of Jesus so much centred, and ask him what he thinks of faith, he answers, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth?" "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." Paul, who is suspected by some of laying too much stress on faith, gives the grandest picture of love; and John, who is suspected by others of laying too much stress upon love, attributes, nevertheless, in the midst of his portraiture of love, the strength, and force, and victory to faith.

The truth is, that faith is the root under-

ground, not always seen ; because it feeds upon the unseen. We trace faith not by seeing it, but by seeing its fruits. It is the hidden force, coiled up in the regenerated heart, which gives birth to that victory over sin and Satan and the world, which is described as more than victory, through him that loved us.

The true definition of faith, when we take the original word for our guide, is not an abstract, intellectual belief, if that be possible ; but “ confidence ”—(*πιστις*). It is the same to the mind, that leaning on a stick, or a wall, or on a foundation, or on any other support, is to the body. It is not a cold conviction that lies in the understanding ; but a warm, generous confidence, that lives in the innermost recesses of the heart. That man does not truly believe, who does not bring head and heart to rely upon “ the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

Is it objected by some, that the gospel lays too much stress upon this confidence — for we may translate the word very properly “ confidence.” We ask, is not faith, or confidence, the very cement of the whole structure, and pyramid of social life. Without faith, or confidence in the laws of nature, as they are commonly called, the

farmer would not sow, the man of business would not enter into engagements or make promises, and the sailor would not attempt to cross the Atlantic. The artisan would not labour, except he had faith that the market would be open, and accessible to the products of his labour. In other words, by faith the farmer sows, the merchant speculates, the sailor goes to sea, and the artisan engages in his daily toil. Whether we like it or not, the just and the unjust live by faith. The just live a higher life, the unjust live a lower, but both must live by faith. Take away this "faith"—or "confidence"—and what is the worth of any institution that we have? Take away confidence from a bank, and it goes to ruin. Exhaust public confidence from an insurance office, and it will soon be broken up. Take away confidence from government, and its stability is gone. Exhaust the confidence of man in man, and each individual would be insulated from the rest of society, and would look with a cold suspicion upon his neighbour, and all reciprocal good offices would cease, and society would fall to pieces, or corrupt and rot under its own depravity and wickedness.

Faith or confidence is necessary to the very existence of the social system, and, if it be perfectly reasonable that confidence should be so important an element in this under world, is it unreasonable to suppose that God should have laid hold of so precious an element, and made it occupy a mighty and important place in the higher world?

It has, however, been objected by some to faith, and to the stress that is laid on it, that many persons substitute "I believe" for "I do," or "I give," "I love." St. James tells us, that it is not the exercise of true Christian faith, to say to the cold, "Go, and be warmed," to the naked, "Go, and be clothed," while he does not warm nor clothe them; and he asks very naturally, "Can such a faith—can this sham faith save?" It is this sham faith that St. James speaks of, and not the faith of the gospel. But when persons do substitute "I believe" for "I do," "I love," religion is not to be blamed, surely, for this perversion of it. The man who substitutes the creed for the decalogue, who thinks the repetition of the one without an omission to be an atonement for his breach of the other; who thinks that

orthodoxy is a sufficient substitute, and an atonement for immorality, and that right believing is good enough, although there be not right living; perverts the gospel, has not only no right faith, but has no idea of the nature or obligations of faith. There cannot be real faith, or confidence in God, in the Scriptural sense of that word, without a retinue of Christian graces constantly in its train. To talk of faith being imperfect without works, is just as foolish as to talk of a fire being imperfect without heat, or of the sun being imperfect without sun-beams. If there be no heat, there is no fire; if there be no light, there is no risen sun; if there be no good works, there is no faith. There cannot be true Christian faith, unless there follow it, necessarily and truly, a thorough Christian practice. Faith gives momentum to every grace, the direction it is to take, the vitality in which it flourishes; and without faith, all Christian graces would instantly expire.

The definition of the apostle is, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for."

There has been a great deal of discussion as to what is the precise meaning of the word "substance." Perhaps the plainest expletive

is, it is the "basis" of things hoped for, that whatever good hope a man has, must, if it be good, lean upon the foundation of previous sound faith. In other words, it teaches us, that it is impossible to cherish a hope worth having, unless we have a faith that will issue in fruition; that for all good things that are truly hoped for, there must be good things that are truly believed in. Faith, the belief of good, is the basis of hope, the expectation of good.

When it is said, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," we naturally ask, What are some of these things? what did Noah, and Enoch, and Abel expect? There are some things that are properly the objects of hope; there are other things that we never ought and never can hope for. Persons say, "I hope for the forgiveness of my sins;" "I hope one day to repent." This language is absurd. Forgiveness of sin is not the object of hope at all; it is the object and possession of faith. "I hope to repent," is delusion; because I repent through believing, not by hoping. It is the ruin of many, that they hope to be forgiven; it is the joy and safety of thousands, that they believe that they are forgiven, or in order to be forgiven. We are

not to hope to be forgiven ; but to believe, in order to be forgiven, or that we are already forgiven. We are not to build our faith upon our hopes, but our hopes upon our faith. Thus "faith is the substance," the basis, "of things hoped for."

No Christian ought, or is warranted, to hope for increase of pardon and justification before God. Every one is now, by faith in the righteousness of Christ, either completely justified, so that his justification cannot be increased, or he is not justified at all. We may be imperfectly sanctified, because the work of the Holy Spirit is a progressive one ; but we cannot be imperfectly justified. We either are clothed in the righteousness of the Lamb that has been slain ; and because of that righteousness, Omniscience cannot see a flaw in us ; or we are so completely strangers to that righteousness, so destitute of it, that we have no title to heaven whatever in the sight of God. Justification is the same to the believer who yesterday was forgiven, as it is to the saint who stands upon the verge of glory, and has been justified for fifty years. We are perfectly justified, or not justified

at all. We cannot, therefore, hope for increase of justification in the sight of God.

Nor can we hope for increase of the love of God. God's love to us is not increased with the increase of our faith. He loved us from everlasting, just as he loves us now, and in either case so intensely, that the exponent of that love is the gift of his only begotten Son—the Lord Jesus Christ. We may enjoy more of that love by having the inner eye more open to its reception; but to increase that love is impossible. We cannot increase the infinite. The breath of the babe cannot add to the impetus of the hurricane. The tear of the orphan cannot add to the immensity of the waters of the unsounded sea. The finite cannot increase the infinite. God's love, infinite in its existence, unchangeable in its application, must be "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" we cannot expect an increase of it.

What, then, are we warranted to hope for? What hope should we build upon the increase of our faith? The great hope constantly held out in the New Testament is the promised return of the Lord Jesus Christ; that return

which Enoch prophesied: "I will come again, and receive you to myself." To them that look for him, he will come a second time, without sin to salvation. "Looking for," says the apostle, "that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour." In other words, we do not believe, for our salvation, in justification by faith, but in Christ; so we do not hope for a millennium, but for Christ. The faith of the Christian rests upon a personal Being—Christ; the hope of the Christian stretches to a personal Being—Christ. We believe upon him for the forgiveness of our sins; we hope in him for the perfection of our glory, and happiness for ever. The faith of the Christian believes in the truth of the promise; the hope of the Christian feeds upon the goodness of the promise. Faith takes the cup in its hand that God freely offers; hope tastes the wine that is in the cup, and is gladdened and exhilarated thereby.

A Christian may also hope for that blessed inheritance that God has promised. He has reserved for us an entrance into blessedness—an inheritance shall be administered unto us, real though unseen, the subject of promise, the

not seen." In other words, a Christian has another sense. As truly as the natural eye sees the panorama, the landscape, the rock, the flowers, the trees; so truly an inner eye, which is the gift of God, and the possession of every Christian, sees things that are unseen and eternal. The things that are unseen by the natural eye are as real to the inner eye of a child of God, as the things that are seen by the natural eye are to the natural man. No natural light, bude light, electric light, or other, can enable a blind man to see. No reasoning, no philosophy, no science, no eloquence, can enable an unregenerate man who has not this inner eye that God gives, to see the things of glory, of eternity, and of happiness to come.

To a Christian, faith in God's word is surer than geometry to a geometrician, or mathematics to a man of science. He believes in virtue of a sense that a natural man has not. In other words, faith, while it has an analogous thing in the natural man in the shape of confidence in human things, is nevertheless a gift of God; as the apostle says, "To you it is given to believe;" and only in the exercise of this inspired faith we see things that are unseen.

Let us ascertain some of the things unseen, that faith sees.

A natural man, that is, a man that is unregenerate, may come to a conclusion that a God exists. Justly he may say, I trace his footprints on every acre of the earth, and I can see his smiles in the morning light, I can hear his voice in the thunder, and in the chimes of the sea, and there are so many and so marked exhibitions of system, of goodness, and of design in the visible frame-work of this outer world, that I come to this conclusion, that there is a God. But a Christian, while he comes to the same conviction, on the same premises, has, in addition to this, faith which is "the evidence of things not seen." In other words, a Christian believes that there is a God upon an additional ground, and that additional ground is, Thus saith the Lord: God's enunciation of himself is the everlasting ground on which a Christian believes that there is a God.

Another thing unseen which the Christian believes, and Adam foresaw and Abel looked for, is the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ — a cardinal and vital truth in the gospel. "Great is the mystery of godliness." No man

can comprehend it; but the Bible asserts it, and therefore the Christian believes it. And this incarnation of Jesus is not a dreamy abstraction, an artistic representation, but a Divine person. Jesus is not the God-like in the human nature, he is not latent divinity in man, nor divine biography in man, as the Pantheists call him; but he is "God," the personal God, "manifest in the flesh." A Christian, although he does not see Christ, yet believes in Christ; and the faith by which he thus believes, is to him "the evidence of things not seen."

So, in the same manner, we accept the work of the Holy Spirit of God. The world laughs at it; the natural man, and very gifted men, call it fanaticism; and yet it is just as much a fact as any of the phenomena in the natural world, that one has undergone a change that has cast a new light upon the universe, and made all things become new; and that another has not undergone that change, but is sensuous, carnal, of the earth, earthy. A Christian sees the Holy Spirit's work within him, because he believes the Holy Spirit's word without him. He does not see the Spirit's work, and yet he believes its reality, because faith is to him "the

evidence of things not seen." Some of the most potent agencies in the outer world are unseen. The most powerful element in nature is invisible. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit of God."

A man that has this faith, the faith of a Christian, believes also in the immortality of the soul, and its emergence at death from its earthly tabernacle. We may conclude, from manifold presumptions, that the soul survives the body; but we cannot irrefragably prove it. But the Christian hears God pronouncing its immortality, and that faith which accepts whatever God has written, is to him the basis of the thing that is told him, and the evidence of the things that the natural eye cannot see.

Faith not only discloses things that are unseen, but it brings them near and appropriates them. It brings God near, it brings Christ near, it brings the future near, it brings the unseen near to us. So truly so, that the Christian acts from motives, and entertains objects, and aims, and hopes which are strange and mysterious altogether to a natural man. A natural man

cannot understand how any one should brave shame, or despise riches, or hate even life itself, rather than light a little incense, as the Christians were asked to do, upon the altar of Jupiter. A natural man cannot understand how he should lose a splendid profit by deference to some inner light — some mighty motive, that guides, sustains, and actuates the soul within. But a Christian does. And why? Because a natural man lives in a lower element, and a Christian lives in a higher. They to whom the sea is the natural element, cannot understand the movements of them whose element is the air. A Christian lives in the higher element, and, therefore, what influences, guides, moves, directs him, is altogether a mystery to the world; so truly so, that the world knoweth us not, as it knew Him not.

And faith not only brings near, it also appropriates. It puts the word "mine" to every thing that God says, and to every thing that God has promised. Any man can say, There is a God, a Saviour, a Bible, a heaven; but, in the exercise of that faith which is to a Christian "the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for," he can

say, He is my God, he is my Saviour, he is my Sanctifier ; and that heaven is my heaven, and that happiness is my happiness.

Thus, faith sets in motion almost all the springs that can move and actuate the human soul. So true is this, that he must be a stranger indeed to faith who does not bring forth all the fruits of the Spirit, and show, in his whole walk and conversation, that he is moved and guided by an inner but unseen motive power, that is "the victory that overcometh the world." If a man believe truly that there is a region where gold is to be had only for the gathering, or that there are streams, like those of Pactolus of old, whose sands are golden, he goes to that land, and seeks for what can enrich him ; or if there be an invalid who hears of a land where there is a bright sun and a cloudless sky, where his health may be invigorated and restored, he sails for that land, and avails himself of it. If you truly believe that you are lost by nature, and can only be saved by grace ; if you really believe that you are perishing and passing to everlasting death, and that there is an arm stretched down from the skies on which you have only to lay hold to be drawn up to everlasting glory ; if

you with your affections and heart believe this, it is impossible that you can fail to seize that hand, and so to hope for that glory.

This faith, wherever it is, triumphs in every case, too, over death. A Christian by faith triumphs over death. The grave, which shocks some, does not shock him. He knows that he leaves in the grave only the robes in which he officiated as a Levite in the outer temple of God; into the texture of which robes his hopes, his joys, his happiness do not enter. A Christian, that is, he who has true faith, who has this inner eye that sees the things that are invisible, detects no more connexion between death and extinction, than between life and extinction. In other words, dust and the soul, corruption and the spirit, have no connexion whatever in a Christian's estimate. He cannot see that the soul dies, because the body dissolves; or that, because the one goes to corruption, the other must be annihilated. On the contrary, believing God's testimony, and seeing the things that are unseen by this inner and true eye, he believes that the wreck of the material frame is only the emergence and the disentanglement of the glorious tenant that inhabited it.

Such is that true faith, the basis of the happy things we hope for, the evidence of the true things which we believe, which the Church before the Flood lived by, as truly as we. Have we this faith implanted in our hearts? Have we a life distinct from and superior to the life that dies? Have we springs and motives of action that the world has not? Do we feel "Thou, O God, seest me;" and is this far more real and cogent and constraining in our experience than any any other motive that the world can present? Do we feel, that because Christ has loved us, which we believe, that we ought to love him, and, loving him, to live to him, which is our duty? The evidence of the sun being risen is that he shines; the evidence of the fire being kindled is that it gives forth heat; the evidence of faith being in us is that we act as faith prescribes, directs, and dictates. Can you, dear reader, believing these things, pray earnestly, "Lord, increase our faith?" Such a petition is the evidence of faith. No man ever asked for faith from the depths of his heart, who had not already a portion of faith to enable him thus to ask. He who can say, "Take my case in thine hand, thou Great Physician, and heal

me," has the inner eye that sees that physician already. The blind sees none. The fact that we see Christ, and appeal to him, is the evidence that the inner eye has been couched, and that we have that faith, which "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

If we have this faith, we shall have peace. There is no one more marked fruit of faith spoken of in the Scriptures than peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee;" and again, "Justified by faith, we have peace with God." If there be this confidence in God, this sweet composure of our souls in the bosom and within the everlasting arms of our Father and of our God, then no storms that rage without can disturb us, no changes, perils, or vicissitudes can move us. When Noah was in the ark, he heard the hailstones patter on the roof, and around him the noise of the angry surges; but he felt peace. Why? not because the caulking, or the timber, or the bolts of that ark were all that he could wish them to be; but because God had said that the ark should outlive it all, and land upon Ararat its redeemed ones, no more to

look out upon a world under water ; but upon a world rebaptized, and renewed. Even so now, we shall have peace, not because we are strong, courageous, and clever, or have patronage, or money, or friends ; but because God keeps him “in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon him.” Abel died in peace ; Noah felt peace in the ark ; by faith Daniel had peace in the den of lions. By faith Paul and Silas sang in their dungeon at midnight. By faith John saw Patmos transformed into a beauteous Paradise. By faith the tongues of martyrs, like harp-strings, emitted their sweetest sounds when they were dying. Their spirits passed to glory while anthems and praises were upon their lips. By faith we too shall overcome. It is want of faith that makes some alarmed for the safety of the truth when a leaf falls from a tree. It is the presence of faith that enables the Christian to say, “ Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, we will not be afraid : for God is our refuge.” It is want of faith that makes hundreds and thousands tremble for evangelical truth, because the pope has imported a cardinal into London. It is Christian

confidence in the truth that makes all true believers feel persuaded that all the cardinals in Rome will never be able to eradicate eternal truth. God has promised to us and to it immortality — He has declared that Babylon, like a great mill-stone, shall be cast into the depths of the sea, and shall be no more heard of at all. The greatest blunder that the Vatican ever perpetrated was that appointment. If there be truth in prophecy, or if the line of illustration we have tried to teach be true, it is just when the candle is going out, that it sends forth its brightest but short-lived lustre ; it is when death is going to close upon the body, that the most spasmodic action takes place ; it is just when Popery is about to be finally cast down, that its most desperate efforts will be made. But they will all be made in vain. We believe in God, we believe also in Jesus, and, therefore, we have peace—perfect peace. The Lord reigns, the Lord is our refuge, we shall not be afraid. The same God that carried the Church before the Flood across the waters to Ararat, will conduct us through the last and more terrible baptism of the earth, to the everlasting hills of blessedness and peace.

CHAPTER XXI.

FULL ASSURANCE.

“ If bliss had been in art or strength,
None but the wise and strong had gained it ;
Where now, by faith, all arms are of a length,
One size doth all conditions fit.

“ A peasant may believe as much
As a great clerk, and reach the highest stature :
Thus dost thou make proud knowledge bend and crouch,
While grace fills up uneven nature.”

“ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.”—
1 JOHN v. 10.

JOHN enunciates the test of our Christianity on evidence intelligible to ourselves, and within our own reach ; a test applicable to antediluvians as to us ; in other words, he says that no man need be ignorant of the way he walks in, of the destiny he is wending to, of the character he sustains, and of the nature and the foundation and the strength of those hopes which he now cherishes. A man cannot well be a Christian without in some degree knowing it. He that believeth on

the Son of God has the reflex influence of that belief by having the witness in himself. How important is this statement! No one need remain long ignorant of what he is, or indeed even be doubtful of what he is. Cain knew he was no saint. There are data in which, and by which, each may ascertain whether he be a Christian, or a mere child of the world. Let us proceed to enumerate them. Faith, as we have already seen, plays an important part in the gospel. We cannot read the New Testament, or the previous chapter of this work, without seeing that there is ascribed to faith so much, that it seems the leading grace of the Christian character. It is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is "the victory that overcometh the world." It worketh by love, it purifieth the heart.

The vital idea of faith is not an intellectual conviction that lies cold and inoperative in the mind, but an inward moral feeling, that constrains, and kindles, and sanctifies the heart. In faith there is as much of a moral as of an intellectual element. It means the trust, or leaning of the heart, that feels its safety to be in

doing so, rather than the conviction of an intellect that believes it orthodox, or right, to believe so. In other words, faith is as much a feeling as a conviction. It is more trusting in something we believe will sustain us, than mere credence of a dogma that we believe to be true. It relates more to the heart than to the head, and indicates its birth-place by the plastic power it exercises on the whole tone and temperament and conduct of the human character.

Faith in Christ is not a substitute, or meant to be a substitute, for morality, but the root of it. When we hear one person say, we are saved by faith, and another person say, we are saved by works, it seems at first as if the one were just the correlative of the other; and as works are the foundation of one man's hopes, right or wrong, so faith is the foundation of another man's hopes, true or false. But it is not so. Faith is no more the ground of my acceptance before God than good conduct. If it were so, Adam's creed would be, Do, and live. Our creed would be, Believe, and live; and the difference would be this, — Rightness of life was the ground of Adam's acceptance; rightness of creed would be the foundation of our

acceptance ; but there is no more possibility of justification by believing rightly, than there is in doing rightly. In other words, orthodoxy is not the ground of our salvation. The devils believe all the articles of the creed, and yet they are not saved, but tremble ; and a man may still remember all the dogmas of Christianity, and yet not be a Christian at all. The ground of our acceptance is the righteousness of Christ, received by faith ; as the ground of Adam's acceptance before he fell was a perfect righteousness achieved by his own doings. The difference between our condition and Adam's is, that Adam had to *do* righteousness, which, if done, was his right to heaven ; we have to *receive* righteousness, which as received is our right to heaven. What he had to do, we have simply to receive. He worked his way to heaven, and if he had persevered, he would have obtained it ; we receive our title to heaven, and holding fast that title, we are sure of the blessed and glorious result. " He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.

But, whilst faith is not the substitute for works, nor right believing the substitute for right doing, yet wherever there is true faith in

the human heart, there will be true holiness in the human life. There is no such thing as faith without works—it is an absurdity to suppose it. There may be what James calls a faith, reputed so by man, without works, but there cannot be the divine and elevating principle of the gospel, unless it be followed by all the fruits of righteousness, and move radiant in an atmosphere of light and life, so conspicuous that he that reads may run while he does so. One would not think of speaking of the sun in his meridian without light; nor would one talk of a fire without heat; we do not speak of a living tree without bud, or blossom, or fruit of some sort. So, to speak of living faith without fruits, is to suppose that a man having life can neither hear, nor taste, nor move a limb nor a muscle through his whole frame. The thing is absurd. If there are no fruits, there is no faith; if there be faith at all, there must necessarily be some, or all the fruits of the gospel. Faith in Christ means, to trust in Christ as the only sacrifice, and to receive from Christ, as the Prophet and the King, direction how to live. From Christ as a sacrifice, we receive a new life; from

Christ as our King, we receive a new direction. We take pardon from the altar, we take direction from the sceptre, and wherever Christ is relied on truly for the forgiveness of all our sins, he is deferred to really for direction in all our doings. He, then, that thus believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.

It is said, "He that believeth on the Son of God." It is very beautiful, and very important to recollect, that the gospel of Christ is not trust in a doctrine, but in a person. Our creed is not, I believe in Christianity, but, I believe in Christ. And when the question was asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer was not, Believe in justification by faith—but, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The beauty of the gospel is, that it brings us into contact, not with a valley of dry bones, or dead and uninfluential dogmas, but into living, personal connexion with Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of all that believe. Hence our faith is not in the testimony, but in the testifier. The living stone, that is, the Christian, is built, not upon a dead doctrine, but upon the living Rock, the Lord Jesus

Christ; he that believeth, therefore, not in the fact that Jesus died, but in the person of the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.

The epithet under which the Saviour is here presented, is instructive. "He that believeth on the Son of God." The name, Son, implies Father, and to accept the Son as our sacrifice, is, in that acceptance, to be thrown back upon the Father, as the fountain of the love that gave that sacrifice. Hence, he that believeth on the Son's propitiatory sacrifice, necessarily believes in the love of the Father, out of which that sacrifice proceeded. He that believeth on the Son for the forgiveness of his sins, believes on the Father, as the fountain of that love, and the justifier of all them that believe. Thus, to believe in Christ, is to believe in him as the expression and the channel of the Father's love, as the altar, the sacrifice, the Priest, the Prophet, and the King. It is not the reception of a legendary tradition, it is not the worshipping of an ancient and a venerable relic, but it is living in communion with, and actually resting upon, one who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. The apostle Paul's language is

not, I count all but loss for the excellency of justification by faith, precious as that doctrine is, but, I count all but loss for the excellency of Christ. Hence, the Christian runs the race that is set before him, not looking to heaven as his ultimate and everlasting home, which it is, but looking to Jesus, as the author and the finisher of his faith. And in this respect, Christianity differs from every false religion. It is not a certain Shibboleth we pronounce, a certain dogma we proclaim, but a living, ever present, ever precious, ever glorious Saviour, in whom we trust in life, on whom we lean at death, and with whom we hope to spend an everlasting and inexhaustible eternity. He then that thus believeth on the Son of God hath, we are told, the witness in himself.

The witness is the main idea of the passage, and on this I wish chiefly to dwell. He has the witness in himself. That is, he has the evidence within, of the reality of his trust in a Saviour without. In other words, translated into simpler, or rather paraphrastic, language, he who is a Christian can scarcely escape the discovery that he is so. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." Now let

us see what are some of the evidences that we are Christians, or some of the reflex operations of faith upon our own hearts, as we look introspectively, by which we know that we are the children of God.

The fact that so great an interposition as Christ the Saviour was needed, is the indication of a great ruin that required it. It is impossible that so tremendous a proviso should have been made for our recovery, if our ruin had not been total, complete, and otherwise irremediable. The Bible testifies outside of us, what man is inside. And is it not the fact, that when we read the volume that describes what is in man, we can scarcely ever escape the accompanying persuasion, that he who wrote these sketches of human corruption, that are recorded without, must have been acquainted with all the springs, and movements of the heart within, and that no more triumphant proof that the Bible is the inspiration of God than the knowledge of what our own heart is, can be adduced amid the many evidences and the credentials of Christianity itself.

Many a one has said, and not with feigned lips, that he who wrote the Bible, must have known all the windings, and coils, and cover-

ings and mysteries of the human heart. The picture without is so perfect a transcript of all that is within, that he who compares the one with the other, has the witness in his own heart, that the Bible is the inspiration of God, and the record of everlasting truth.

But this witness within is yet more realized by the fact, that the faith in the Son of God which is here spoken of, makes invisible things visible. If it be true, that he who believes on the Son of God sees what another man does not see, he has the evidence within himself that his faith is real. To a Christian, faith is precisely what sight is to a natural man. Another man sees the sun, and moon, and stars, the splendid and the wide-spread panorama of the world around him, and he is just as satisfied that he has the faculty of seeing, as he is that these things exist. The fact that he sees them, is to him the evidence that his eye is real, and transmits them. So it is with the Christian, who has faith. He who believes on the Son of God, sees things that are unseen, and the evidence that he sees them is the fact that he acts as if they were present. A man who has no faith, does not recognise God's presence, nor act as if

God were looking on, nor feel as if he were responsible to that God who sees him; but a Christian, who believes on the Son of God, lives under the sense of God's presence, feels his responsibility to him, and is guided and governed as if a present God, which to the world is a phantom, were to him a reality; and the very fact that he feels influenced by the unseen God, and guided by the prospects of an unseen eternity, is proof to him that he has the eye that sees those things — the faith which is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” When I look through a telescope, and that telescope shows me Saturn with his rings, or Jupiter with his satellites, I have, in sight of these two planets, evidence of the reality of the telescope; so, when I feel as if God were present, act under the impulse of things unseen but not unfelt, I have in that consciousness the proof that my faith is real; and thus believing on the Son of God, by what it brings of the unseen within the horizon, and by what it introduces of the otherwise unfelt into my own heart, I have the evidence that I believe on the Son of God, and am thus so far

proved a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

He that believes has the evidence in himself to this extent, that he has the consciousness within him of a great change, expressed by John in the Gospel as being "born again," or born from above. The whole of this Epistle contains a series of criteria, by which we ascertain whether we are children of God, and are born of him, and are believers in his Son. Thus the very commencement is, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God,"—here then is one criterion. "Whosoever believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." The two texts correspond; the one is, whosoever believeth has the new birth; the other is, whosoever believeth hath the witness in himself. Thus the new birth is self-evidential. A man must know that he is truly born again; and how is it possible that there can be any doubt? The change is so vast, the transformation is so great, that it is surely improbable that a man can be born again, and never dream for once that he is so. New tastes are generated by a new birth; new hopes are inspired in a heart that is its subject. That

which was toil before, is pleasure now; that which was exacted as a sacrifice once, is now rendered joyfully as a free-will offering. You feel that you move in a new sphere; that you breathe a new atmosphere; that you are actuated by new motives; that you are impelled by dazzling and glorious hopes; and it is impossible to escape the conviction, because you cannot escape yourself, that you are born again: that thus you believe on the Son of God, or that Jesus is the Christ. This was dimly but really felt in the Church before the Flood.

John gives another test or criterion of the very same experience, when he says, "And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." In other words, wherever there is faith in the Son of God, there is love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to one another. Thus it is easy to test ourselves, whether we have faith in the Son of God, by translating the question of the apostle into other but no less significant language,—Do I love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do I love his sabbaths? Do I love his word? Do I love his people? Do I love his sacrifice? These are plain and intelligible questions; and yet the

answer to these questions determines whether we have faith in the Son of God, that is, whether we be Christians at all. "Whom having not seen," says the apostle Peter, "ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Wherever there is faith there is love in the heart to him who is its author, and that love will show itself in willing sacrifices of what we prefer, when these are required in obedience to him that died for us. It will indicate its force in the surrender of that which is good and prized by us, because he to whom we are so deeply indebted demands it. Some things we must sacrifice—such as sin; other things we must subordinate—such are worldly possessions; and some things we must utterly give up—such as Christ condemns, and reprobates, and abhors: and all this we shall do, if we have faith in the Son of God, and, implanted in our hearts, that kindling spark, that divine and celestial flame, which glows with increasing ardour, and advances with spreading power, until it is merged in that life which is without limit, and without measure, and without end, in the kingdom of God and of his Christ.

Wherever there is this faith in the Son of God, or that which is its equivalent, being born again, we shall love his commandments. We shall not only have that love which prompts us to obey him, but also that change of nature which makes us like those commands which once we thought very grievous. "His commands," says the apostle, "are not grievous." A Christian will not only do what Christ bids him because Christ bids him, but also because, by the new instinct of his new nature, he delights to do so. No slight evidence of Christian grace is, our feeling more pleasure in giving a shilling to Christ's cause, than we ever felt in earning it. We have not yet risen to the enjoyment of that high test of living love, and real Christianity, if we do not thus feel. There is deficiency, though there may not be absence of all that is essential to constitute the Christian character.

Where there is this faith in the Son of God, there will be victory over the world. "This is the victory," says John, "that overcometh the world, even our faith." Its bright things will cease to dazzle, its dark things will cease to alarm; we shall neither be driven by it

into what is wrong, nor seduced by it into what is sinful; but, by our fast grasp of an unseen and a better world, by our faith in him who is the way to it, we shall overcome the world; and the trophies that we gain will be the evidences of the triumph, and our credentials, beautiful and welcome, that we believe in the Son of God, and thus discover so far the witness within ourselves, that our faith is not a fiction, but a reality, a substance, a truth.

With this faith in the Son of God, there will also be the consciousness of spiritual and divine life. Spiritual life is to a Christian exactly what sensibility is to a man. When a man is in health, let a pin prick his little finger, and he feels pain; even so in spiritual health, let the least thing that is sinful touch him, and he will shrink from it by an instinct stronger than reason. Sin is to the new life precisely what pain is to the natural life, and we have not attained that degree of living religion, that power and presence of the Divinity within us, which is meant to be our possession, and is the characteristic of all true and real believers, till we shrink from what is evil, with instinctive recoil, just as we shrink

from the threatened infliction of pain. Wherever there is true faith in the Son of God, there is an inward and spiritual life, refreshed by living water, nourished by living bread, that grows in force, vitality, and strength; that speaks for Christ when his name is blasphemed; that sacrifices for Christ when his cause is to be promoted; that counts all things but loss for the excellency of him, and is, in its consciousness within, the witness to the believer that he is connected with Jesus Christ, just as the sap that permeates the branch is the evidence of its union with the parent stem to which it belongs.

Have we the life of Christ in the soul? "We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us." Do we feel that we must have bread in the sanctuary in order that that life may be nourished? Are we conscious of hunger for that which is its subsistence and its nutriment, and can we give up all we prefer, rather than give up that which is essentially necessary—bread to nourish and water to refresh the inner and divine life, which is the witness within, that we believe on the Son of God.

He that believeth on the Son of God, has also the sense of sonship. God hath sent into our

hearts the Spirit of his Son, enabling us to say, Abba, Father. A Christian therefore feels that he is a son of God. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath, as the reflex operation of that faith, the Spirit of adoption within him. This we can easily ascertain, by asking ourselves, How do we think of God? Do we think of him as a terrible and an awful Being, whom it is danger to approach in our place of business, and in our employment in the world? Is there any place where God's presence would be a felt intrusion? When we think of God, do we array him in the awful, or in the affectionate? or in the loving, yet the holy? How does a young child think of its parent? With perfect confidence, with little fear. A Christian should think of God precisely in the same way. The highest evidence of our Christianity is the feeling of a son's affection towards God, our great and good Father. Do we go to the table of the Lord as if we were approaching a snare to entrap us, or as to a joyous festival to which we are welcome? Do we draw near to the throne of grace, deprecating wrath, as criminals who dread the judge? or seeking bread, as sons who have confidence in their father? Do we read the Bible

as a book that gleams with the lightnings of Sinai? or as a page all radiant with the love and light of Calvary? What are our feelings towards God? These are evidences within us either that we are strangers to the gospel, and so far enemies, or that we are the friends of God, and believers in his Son; and having the witness within us that we are children, then, if children, we know we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

The next witness within us is, the conscious spring in our hearts of holy and beneficent action. A man who has no real, living religion within him, does religious duties as outward, mechanical things, as calculations, as things that are expedient, or suitable to his circumstances, or fitted to make a good impression on those who are about him; but one who has the love of Christ and the life of God, does religious things not by calculation, but by impulse—not from an expediency, supposed or real, but from an instinct that he cannot help. It is his new nature to do so; and what other men do by mechanical adjustment, by political calculation, by the anticipation and the possibility of contingent results, a Christian does

because the impulse of his new nature leads him to do so. He does good as a tree bears fruit; it is his and its nature equally to do so.

The Christian has the witness within himself in the inward joy which the gospel is ever fitted to inspire. The first effect of the good news of the gospel is joy. The first thing that the gospel does is to make a man happy, and the next, but instantly succeeding thing, is to make him holy. What is the definition of the gospel? Good news. What is the first impression produced upon one by good news? Joy. That joy will dilate into growing gratitude, and that gratitude will unfold itself in growing obedience; and the man who has the greatest joy, as the result of his belief in the good news, will feel in that joy his strength, and in the gratitude into which that joy breaks, as the morning breaks into mid-day, the principle of whatsoever things are lovely, and just, and honest, and of good report. Hence the apostle defines the kingdom of heaven to be righteousness, peace, and joy. The psalmist says of Christian joy, "They rejoice all the day long." That joy will ultimately soften itself into peace. The joy that we feel at the first receipt of good news, becomes less effer-

vescent, but not less powerful, when years have run their cycles long afterwards ; so the Christian, when he is first brought to know the Lord, has his mind radiant with light, and his heart abounding with joy unutterable and full of glory ; but the more he becomes acquainted with the truth, the more his joy decreases as a passion, and the more it consolidates itself into a powerful and actuating principle ; and while in after years he may not have all the brilliancy of his first love, he has more of its quiet peace and strength and force in the depths and recesses of his heart. The first feeling when he heard the gospel was sunshine, the next is day-light. We cannot bear sunshine always, but day-light—sometimes cloud, sometimes shadow, sometimes neither—is best for us. A Christian, therefore, who believes on the Son of God, hath the witness, not only of conscious joy at the outset of his Christian career, but of peace, into which that joy has gradually merged, throughout the rest of his life hereafter, alike in the prospect of a judgment-day, the grave, and of all things seen and earthly passing away. “Thou wilt keep in perfect peace the man whose mind is stayed on thee.”

This is that evidence which peasants and humble mechanics have, which is stronger and more real than all the evidences of learned divines and great philosophers. Many a peasant who never read Paley, or heard of Butler, or saw a volume of Chalmers, has in the depths of his heart an eloquent and a ceaseless witness that the Bible is the word, and that Christianity is the inspiration of God. Were we to ask him on what grounds he concludes that it is so? are you acquainted with the external or the internal evidences of Christianity? he would scarcely know the meaning of the long words and eloquent phrases you employ, but he would tell you, Just as I know that the sun shines, and that the heather grows, and that the streams roll, and that the clouds sail athwart the sky, I know that this book is true, and that Jesus is the Son of God, for I have in my heart, not the foot-prints of his momentary transit, but the glorious sunshine of his ceaseless abiding. I was blind, I now see; I was sinful, I am now sanctified; I was careless, I am now anxious; I was miserable, I am now glad. And I know by instincts within me, ineradicable and indomitable as my own immortality, that Jesus is

the Son of God, and that the Bible that reveals him is the truth and the inspiration of his Holy Spirit. This is the evidence that will stand all shocks; this is the proof of Christianity that scepticism can never sweep away. The Christian feels the effects of the gospel—he realizes all its transforming power—he knows by a consciousness within him, surer than argument, clearer than logic, that he believes on the Son of God, and that the religion he loves and lives is the inspiration of the Almighty.

My dear reader, do you believe on the Son of God? Are you a Christian? Time sweeps past us with the speed of the hurricane; the great ocean of eternity is rolling onward every hour, we stand upon a narrow isthmus that is wasted by time, and washed by the waves of the eternal sea; a few more days, a few more years, and we shall be where there is no more repentance, but where the tremendous results of faith in the Son of God, or of the neglect or the rejection of him, will be eternally and universally realized. How is it that men can live a day without some deep persuasion whether they are the sons of God? How is it that years are allowed to roll on, while no introspective or reflective feelings

are cherished by us, and no honest investigation of the facts of religion in our conscience and our heart is entered into? I know that when I ask you first to be Christians, I ask you not to look within, but to rest upon the object, Christ, that is without. But when I address those who doubt, where there need be no doubt, who hesitate, where there need be no hesitation, who suppose they are Christians, when all facts and all evidences indicate the reverse,—then I ask you to judge by the feelings you have and the fruits you bear, whether you believe on the Son of God, or not.

Decide the question—indecision is present agony; rejection is everlasting ruin; decision for Christ is present and perpetual peace.

THE END.

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